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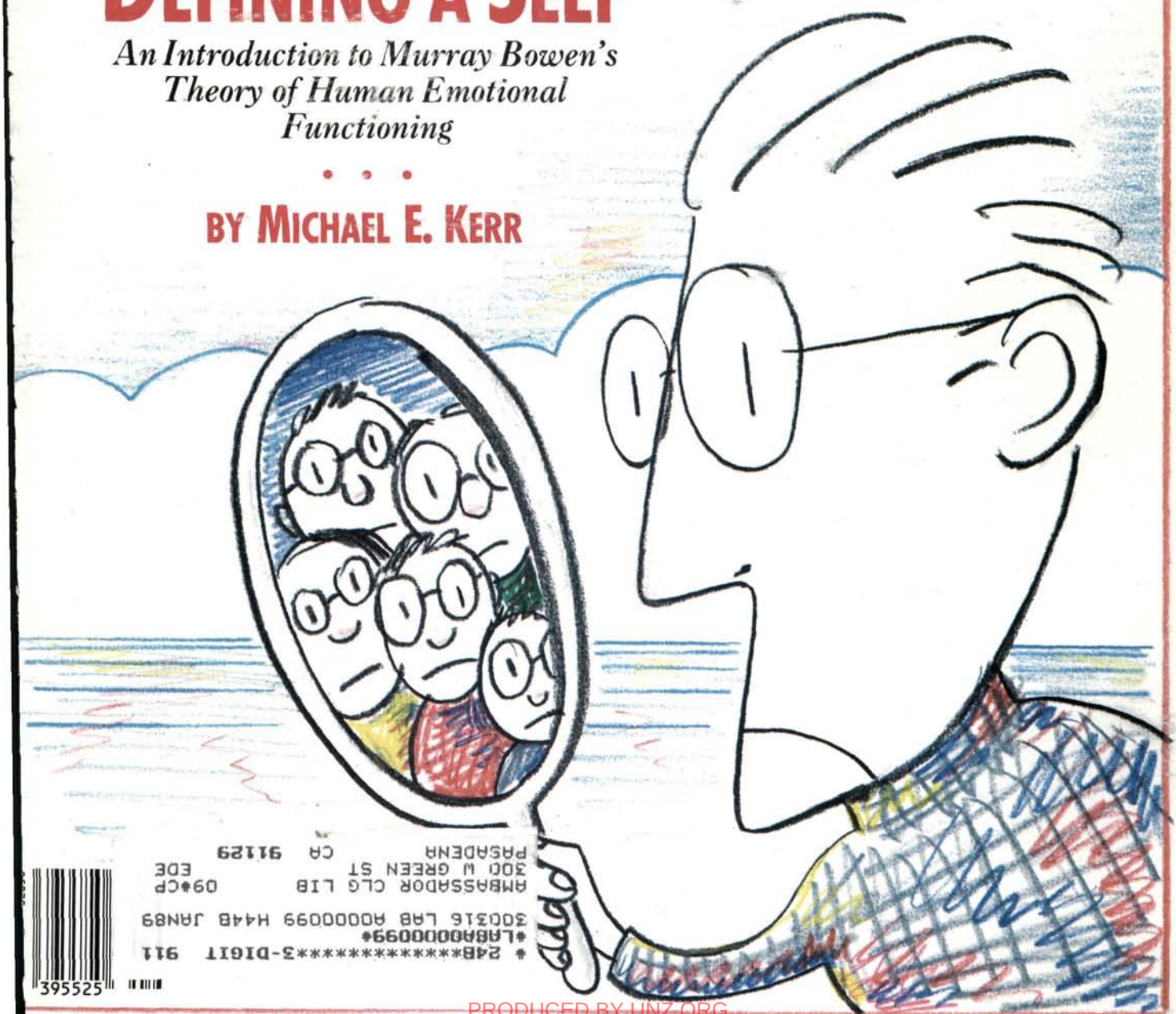
CHRONIC ANXIETY AND DEFINING A SELF

An Introduction to Murray Bowen's Theory of Human Emotional Functioning

• • •

BY MICHAEL E. KERR



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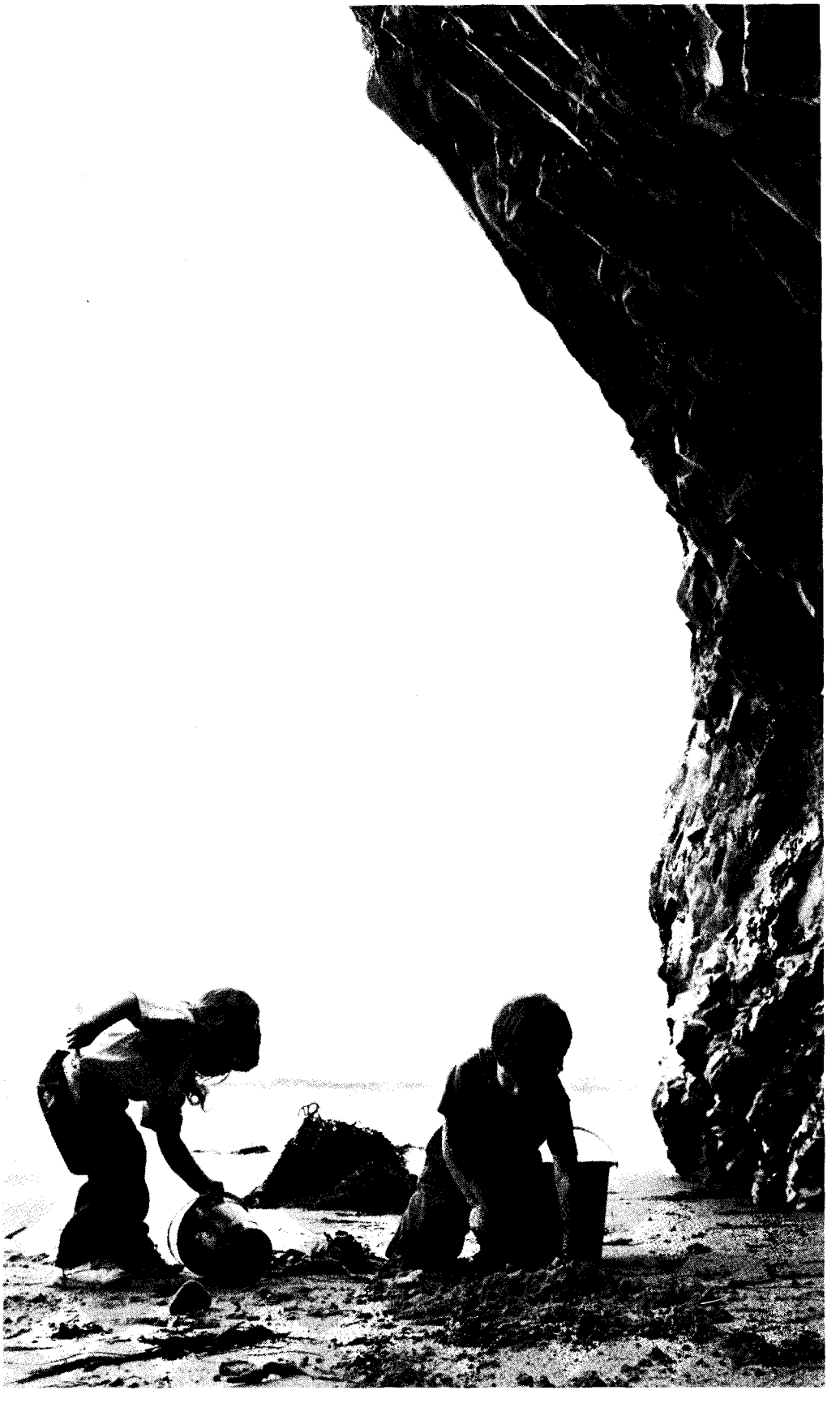

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VOLUME 262 NO. 3

The Atlantic

SEPTEMBER 1988

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The September Almanac was compiled with the assistance of Stephen Malcolm, of the University of Florida; Neil Spitzer, of *The Wilson Quarterly*; Suzanne Gaventa, of the Centers for Disease Control; Gail Cleere and the staff of the U.S. Naval Observatory; and the House Banking Committee.

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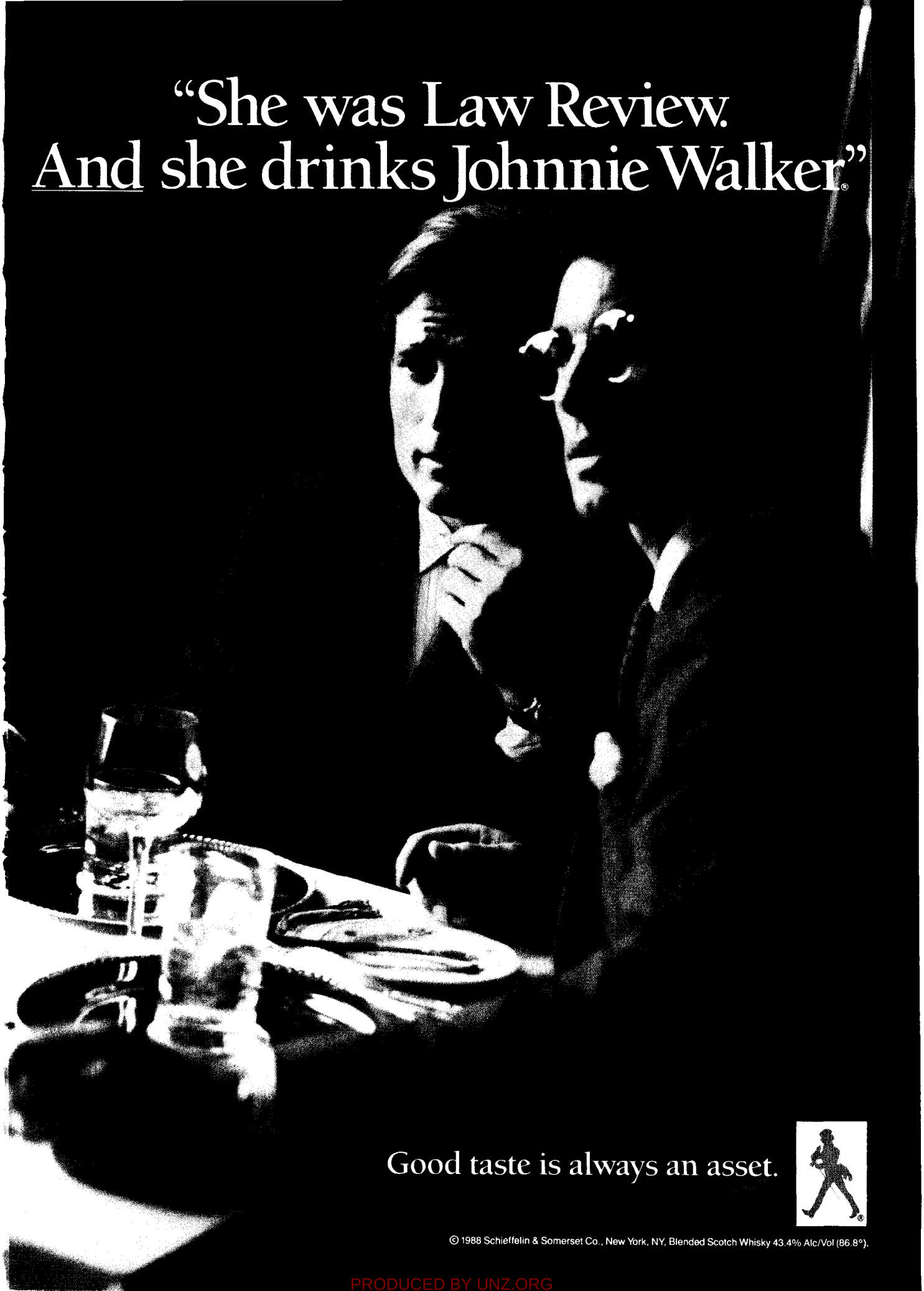

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE REAL PICASSO

Many thanks to Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington for her brilliantly written and insightful article on Pablo Picasso ("Creator and Destroyer," June *Atlantic*). She has given this monstrous talent human form, and helped us to understand some of the personal demons that drove him to the heights of his fame in the art world. But in all honesty, simply as a woman reading about a man, I felt at times during the narrative that I could easily have ripped out Picasso's heart and fed it to the buzzards!

ANNA MARTINEZ GONNELLA
Ramsey, N.J.

The magnificent piece on Pablo Picasso is alone worth the price of my two-year subscription.

CYRIL W. PLATTES
Las Vegas, Nev.

"Creator and Destroyer" reflects *The Atlantic* at its best. This work is thorough and fascinating, and paints a real image of Picasso where before there was only legend.

PETER and JANET E. GRAEBNER
Santa Ana, Calif.

Arianna Huffington does several things. She gives us a more intimate view of Picasso's personal relationships, and in doing so, she sheds light on his psychological state of mind throughout his life. She reveals to us a man who struggled with problems of intimacy, especially with women.

However, to what extent was his continuous line of breakups and affairs a reflection of his feelings about the initial separation from his sister? Was this his way of dealing with this loss? I would have appreciated Huffington's consideration of this possibility. Picasso was as complex as his many-faceted paintings, a Gargantuan man with the soul of a deserted child. One may or may not agree with Yeats when he said, "The intellect of man is forced to choose/Perfection of the life or of the work." Picasso strove for both, but whether he succeeded at achieving personal fulfillment through relationships is up for question.

ALICE MILLER
White Plains, N.Y.

As regards Picasso's alleged quip concerning Max Jacob, it is a piece of gossip in unforgivably bad taste, and it is in bad taste to continue repeating this *ragot*. In any event, Picasso, himself a hostage in occupied Paris, was hardly in a position to intercede with the Nazis in anyone's behalf.

Max Jacob knew better than to ask Picasso to help. He sought help from those with frequent social contacts with Germans, namely Cocteau and Sacha Guitry, the playwright. The latter is the "Sacha" referred to in the letter sent from the train by Jacob to Cocteau. Not Picasso but Cocteau and Sacha Guitry were *embêtés* (to use Arno Breker's euphemism) by purge tribunals after the liberation of Paris. In fact, Sacha Guitry spent several months in prison.

If Françoise Gilot is the source of the information that Picasso had "considerable authority with the Germans," it would contradict what Gilot told me when I interviewed her in 1985. She told me that Gestapo agents frequently visited the artist's studio toward the end of the war, and that she followed them to make sure they did not plant incriminating evidence, which would have given them an excuse to arrest Picasso on their next visit.

Picasso "kept his dignity." This is how Zervos in a 1945 letter to Alfred Barr described the artist's behavior. Moreover, Picasso steered numerous Spanish compatriots in danger toward safe refuge and gave them money.

MICHÈLE CONE
New York, N.Y.

Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington replies:

In his last appeal from Drancy, Max Jacob specifically asked that his friend Picasso "do something for me," as Ms. Cone will find out if she reads Pierre Andreu's authoritative biography of Max Jacob (page 59). It is also Pierre Andreu who confirms the quip that Ms. Cone considers in "unforgivably bad taste." There is indeed unforgivably bad taste here, but it is Picasso's.

What a rat Picasso was! I never liked his cartoons, and now I don't like him.

DAN ALTHOFF
Atlantic Beach, Fla.

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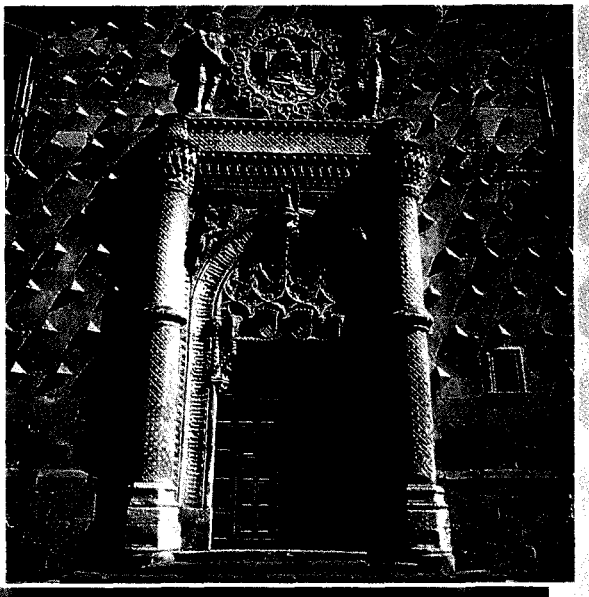
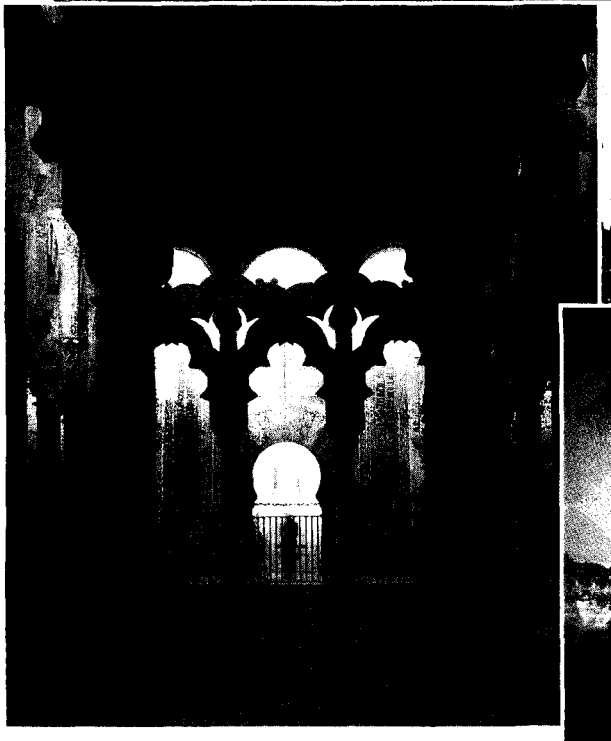


The Palace of the Infantado, Guadalajara.

The Church of La Sagrada Familia, Barcelona.



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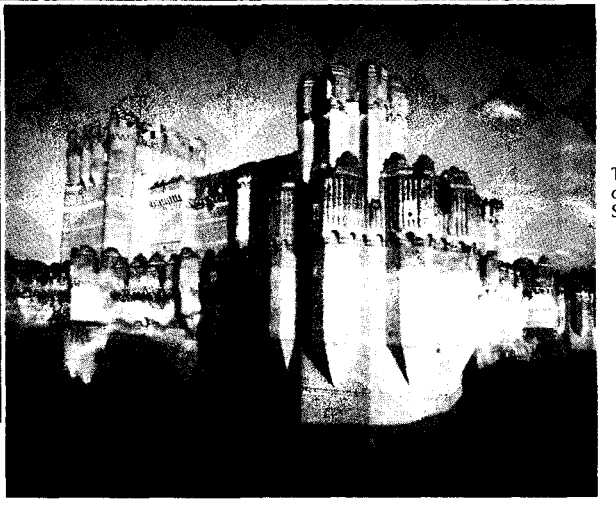

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The second-rate hatchet job on Picasso in the June *Atlantic* really is beneath you. It is so uneven in its treatment, and so sensational in its content, that you sully your rich tradition by publishing such crap.

H. BLUTH
Baltimore, Md.

RETURN OF INEQUALITY

I take exception to Thomas Byrne Edsall's abuse of statistics in "The Return of Inequality" (June *Atlantic*). Either the top five percent (of Americans by income) is "defined . . . as those families making more than $124,651 a year," as he says at the top of page 88, *or* the top five percent *averages* $124,651 a year, as he says in the table at the bottom of page 89. It cannot be both—unless, of course, everyone in the bracket makes exactly the same amount, which is clearly absurd.

Lest we think this was merely a careless oversight, I note that Edsall makes the same conceptual error regarding the top one percent: "those now earning more than $303,900" on page 88, and those *averaging* $303,900 on page 89.

Later, on page 89, he asserts that gains in the top quintile are responsible for a rise in the median family income. He should know that changes in the top quintile can raise the *mean*, but cannot affect the median.

Mr. Edsall's heart is in the right place, but he is clearly not qualified for the statistical analysis he attempted.

ERIC J. EVANS
Brookline, Mass.

Thomas Edsall reports some striking facts concerning inequality, but one of the most striking must be even more striking than he reports.

According to two researchers cited by Edsall, the party-preference gap between churchgoers and non-churchgoers has risen to 35 points, with the former more likely to be Republicans by 22 points and the latter more likely to be Democrats by 13 points.

Edsall does not mention race when discussing those figures. Given the high percentage of blacks who attend church and the huge percentage of blacks who vote Democratic, the gap between *white* churchgoers and non-churchgoers must be even larger.

RUSSELL PITTMAN
Takoma Park, Md.

Thomas Edsall documents the growing economic inequality in America but says not a word about one of its principal causes.

An unintended but entirely predictable consequence of the opening of high-income jobs to women over the past two decades is that doctors, lawyers, bankers, executives, and other high-income earners are now marrying each other. It has become increasingly less likely that a nurse or a secretary will "marry well" and improve her economic position, just as it is improbable that a newly minted J.D., M.D., or M.B.A. will take a waiter or a burger-flipper for a husband.

The women's movement has brought many changes to the face of American society, and increased economic stratification is one of them.

RONALD BERGWERK
Jacksonville, Fla.

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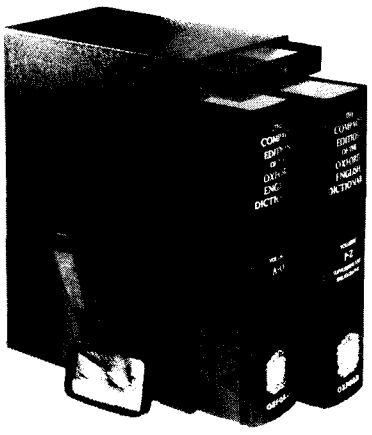

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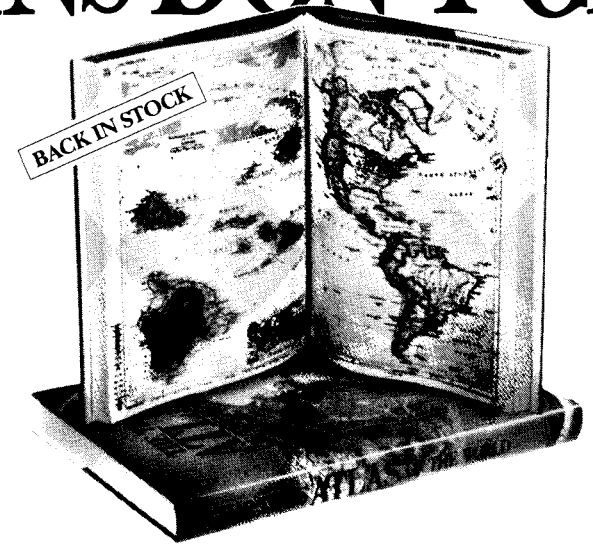

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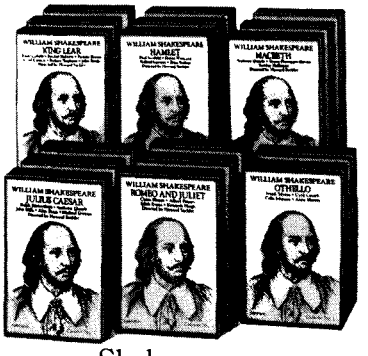

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Edsall's numbers are deceiving, since income is no longer a complete description of economic well-being for the middle and lower classes. Income security is an invisible form of compensation. Associated with most workers' wages are claims on workers' compensation, unemployment compensation, and public old-age pensions. Since most of these programs are progressively indexed above some cutoff figure, middle-class security benefits tend to be disproportionately higher than upper-class benefits. But such security benefits are rarely factored into depictions of income, and remain largely invisible.

However, our Social Security system may actually contribute to certain forms of income inequality. Although conservatives frequently point to problems of induced dependence, a more realistic problem concerns constraints on the scope of unskilled jobs. Besides being distributionally regressive, security-related payroll taxes effectively raise the minimum wage rate and drive many industries requiring unskilled workers overseas in search of cheaper labor. The disappearance of extremely low paying jobs may be applauded by some, but many an unskilled worker would prefer a low-paying job to no job at all. Moreover, once these industries close up shop in the United States, the resulting slack demand for unskilled workers pulls the very lowest wage rates even further downward. Thus our income-security system may appear as either a ceiling or a floor, depending on one's perspective.

All this is not to say that Edsall's concerns are ill founded. On the contrary, statistics revealing severe inequalities of income are rough indicators of both the vast human suffering in our midst and the hypocrisy of that brand of egalitarian rhetoric which serves as mere self-congratulation by ruling elites. Yet in the age of the welfare state these figures serve only as *rough* indicators. Perhaps we should begin examining such issues of public welfare explicitly within the context of the welfare state.

DAVID A. MOSS
New Haven, Conn.

Thomas Byrne Edsall replies:

As Eric Evans points out, I am not a statistician; I am grateful for all the help I can get. The average income of the top five percent is $124,651, and the average income of the top one percent is $303,900. Mr. Evans is mistaken in his claim that I assert that "gains in the top quintile are responsible for a rise in the median family income." I said not that "responsibility" lay there but that most of the increase in family income has been "concentrated in the top quintile."

On the question raised by Russell Pittman concerning the party preferences of the religious and the non-religious, the figures quoted in the article refer to whites and do not include blacks. The 35-point gap would be lessened if blacks were added because of their strong Democratic preferences, among both churchgoers and non-churchgoers.

Ronald Bergwerk's contention that the women's movement is a principal cause of growing economic inequality does not survive analysis. The entry of women into the work force has had very little influence on the distribution of income, according to David Bloom, a professor of economics at Columbia University and a specialist in economic

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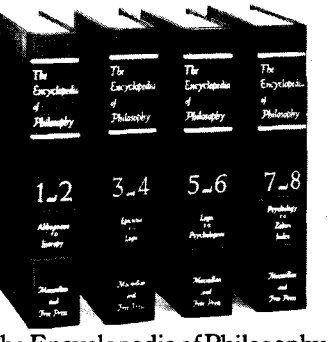

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demography and applied statistics. In addition, the increased number of two-earner families lessens inequality in certain important circumstances. One common cause of poverty has been the loss of a job in a one-earner family, and insofar as there is a second income to prevent earnings from falling to zero, there is a lessening of inequality.

David Moss is correct that cash income alone provides an inaccurate picture of middle- and lower-class well-being; he is, however, incorrect in assuming that my figures reflect cash income alone. The Congressional Budget Office studies from which I drew my data include income from Social Security, unemployment insurance, and veterans benefits, as well as workmen's compensation benefits—just those middle-class income-security programs to which Mr. Moss refers.

I have no argument with Mr. Moss's contention that regressive Social Security taxes have done much to raise labor costs to employers. Changes over the past seven or eight years in the Social Security taxes have increased the effective employer costs of minimum-wage jobs. The minimum wage itself, however, has remained unchanged at $3.35 since 1981, and inflation-indexed increases in the Social Security tax have *not* contributed significantly to the movement of jobs to foreign countries.

Brubach on Ballet

Had Holly Brubach ("Room Enough to Move," May *Atlantic*) been sitting in our seats at the San Francisco Ballet these past twenty years, she might not have concluded, vis-à-vis the board's replacement of artistic directors, that "in San Francisco the audience is overruled." Which audience? Obviously, there were a great many loyal supporters of Michael Smuin's tenure as artistic director, but at least as many of us had long since wearied of Mr. Smuin's excesses, his unerring penchant for the overdone, the obvious, the easy fix. The same San Francisco Ballet audience that packs the Opera House for guest performances of ABT, the New York City Ballet, the Joffrey, the Kirov, the Bolshoi, is now packing the house for its own ballet company. The season just completed, Helgi Tomasson's third, was deservedly well attended and applauded. Far from feeling overruled, many of us welcomed the board's action as long overdue.

Balanchine's board and audiences recognized his genius and did what they needed to do to support it. Freedom and autonomy are prerequisites for creative work of any kind; Balanchine's circumstances "enabled him to make the ballets he did." But, ultimately, the ballets he made did indeed entitle him to his circumstances. Brubach states, "Balanchine, of course, had his board's unanimous respect. He had earned it." The question she does not address is how to proceed when that respect no longer exists. This is what happened in San Francisco, and it is a question of serious import in this post-Balanchine age.

Jacqueline Kudler
Sausalito, Calif.

"Room Enough to Move" is both timely and interesting, but it seems that Holly Brubach fails to mention one key component of the problem of artistic control of ballet: the extraordinary cost of the fine arts in America today. As long as large sponsors are needed to fund productions, they will exert some degree of influence over the artistic direction of the dancing. As Brubach makes clear, the corporate sponsors in San Francisco wanted and now have a "world-class," corporate type of ballet, while the government of Frankfurt wanted and now has a liberal, experimental ballet. However, in neither city does the audience seem completely satisfied, and they are the group that should wield ultimate control.

Balanchine was *not* autonomous; indeed, like all great performing artists, he was very careful to please his audience. The solution to the current difficulty of the ballet companies is to reduce budgets enough that productions can be supported by box-office receipts and individual donations alone. If this were done, all choreographers could have the chance to share in the Balanchine situation.

James Rickert
New York, N.Y.

Holly Brubach replies:

My disagreement with Ms. Kudler is, perhaps, a matter of taste. I believe that the San Francisco Ballet under Michael Smuin had a distinct identity and a dignity, in that it didn't try to approximate the bigger companies based in New York and abroad. I haven't seen the SFB's *Swan Lake*, last season's new production, but I can't help questioning the logic in staging a ballet that so many other companies (ABT, the Kirov, the Bolshoi) bring into town on tour. I think Helgi Tomasson is doing his job as well as anyone could; the standard of the dancing is higher now than it was under Smuin. My concern—and this is the reason I wrote the piece—is with new work and the conditions necessary for making it. I worry that original choreography is falling by the wayside as ballet companies busily acquire "classics" that serve primarily as status symbols.

Balanchine did indeed please his audience, and he appealed to them directly, over the heads of the critics and the board. Unfortunately, reducing a ballet company's budget to the point where box-office proceeds and "individual donations" alone can support a season's performances is unrealistic. At the New York City Ballet, for example, where the most expensive seat in the house costs $42, the total of box-office receipts and touring fees accounts for only 60 percent of the company's annual budget (which for this fiscal year runs to $23,557,000). Such a plan would make for fewer performances and far more expensive tickets, putting ballet out of the reach of all but the rich.

Word Watch

My grandfather would be pleased to know that the editors of *The American Heritage Dictionary* are tracking the word *wallyo*. When I was young, in the 1930s, he lived in Brooklyn and used the term (always preceded by "Hey") indiscriminately for all boys. Thanks to Anne Soukhanov, in the June *Atlantic*, I now know that he adopted it from his Italian neighbors.

Arthur M. Cohen
Los Angeles, Calif.

It's probably futile to complain, but I really retch at Anne Soukhanov's definition (July issue) of a *pulk* as "a sled crafted typically in fiber-glass-reinforced polyester. . . . " Even in the most propitious contexts, *craft* used as a verb tends to diffuse a distracting reek of overripe advertising copy. Nevertheless, I wouldn't bother protesting if it had been used in the only sense in which it is defined in my (vintage 1969) *American Heritage Dictionary*—"to make by hand." But "crafted in fiber-glass-reinforced polyester"? Are we supposed to conclude that a pulk is not truly a pulk un-

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less it is handmade? "Crafted in" indeed! What's wrong with plain old "made of"?

ROBERT B. KUNKEL
Chapel Hill, N.C.

HOME SCHOOLING

As a home-schooling parent with three children, I was delighted to see Alfie Kohn's "Home Schooling" (April *Atlantic*). I am disturbed, though, by his division of home-schooling parents into two ideological camps: the Holtians, whose "libertarian inclinations are tempered by a mostly secular New Age progressivism," and the Moorians, "fundamentalist-Christian home-schoolers, who find public education unfit by virtue of its godlessness." This dichotomy is unrealistic and reflects a disturbing bias against Christian home-schoolers that is evident throughout this otherwise informative article.

If Michael Farris, as quoted by Kohn, is correct that as many as 90 percent of all home-schoolers choose to be so for religious reasons, and if "parents who are home-schoolers can be found anywhere along a continuum of educational philosophies," then it seems to follow that most Christian home-schoolers do not fit into either of the aforementioned camps. Yet the single example Kohn presents of a Christian home-schooler, Carol Prudhon, perpetuates the negative stereotype of Christian home-schoolers as rigid ("some people say I'm too regimented") and intolerant ("some people drop everything . . . and make birds their science lesson for the day. I think that's ridiculous"). No mention is made of her children's accomplishments. The examples of the Holtian Colfaxes and Bergsons are, however, followed by glowing reports of their children's social, academic, and literary achievements.

Bias is likewise evident in the way Kohn describes the children's daily activities. The Colfaxes did "what the boys were interested in," and the Bergson's children's lives "'involve massive amounts of what the outside world would call play.'" Do the Prudhon children ever have fun? One wonders.

My family belongs to a large (120 members) home-schooling support group in Connecticut. Although the organization is not Christian in charter, a large majority of the members are, in fact, Christians. I have yet to meet members who are keeping their children out of school solely to protect them from "secular humanism." Many of the parents have themselves been teachers in the public schools and are supportive of the role of public education. Like Moore and Holt, however, they recognize that children do best when taught in the relaxed, supportive environment of their own homes. Members' approaches to home schooling range from those who use a published curriculum with workbooks and mail-in tests to those who, like Holt, eschew curricula altogether. Most of us fall somewhere in between, supplementing the occasional workbook or reader with an ample dose of projects, games, and family activities.

I would suggest that the traditional Christian emphasis on family values has more to do with the prevalence of Christian families in home schooling than does the dogmatic narrow-mindedness implied by Kohn. It seems that intolerance is more readily observed in the "outspokenly irreligious" Grant Colfax, who categorizes Christian home-schoolers as "people whose philosophy we . . . abhor—fundamentalist, holy-roller types." It's time Grant Colfax and Alfie Kohn recognize that Christians, like other home-schoolers, home-school because they believe it is the most effective and rewarding way to teach their children.

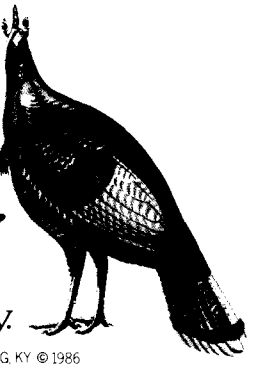
D. M. PETERSON
New Haven, Conn.

Alfie Kohn replies:

I have no quarrel with Mr. Peterson's assertion that Christians who teach their own children do so for a variety of reasons. That there is a range of educational philosophies among home-schoolers is, of course, something I took pains to point out in the article.

Peterson finds bias in my mentioning the accomplishments of the nonreligious Colfaxes (who keep impressing Ivy League admissions committees) while saying nothing comparable about the Prudhon children. Since the latter are six and eight years old, we'll have to wait for a comparable measure of achievement. The conspicuous absence of play and child-directed learning in my account of the Prudhons' education, meanwhile, is a function not of selective reporting but of that family's philosophy.

Too good to gobble.



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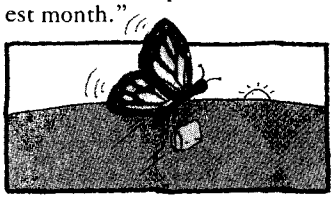
THE SEPTEMBER ALMANAC

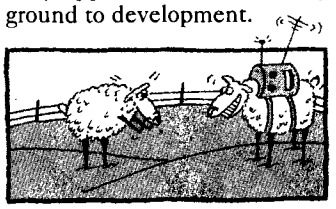
ARTS & LETTERS

In the early part of this month many of the nation's secondary-school students are likely to be rushing to complete *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The Hobbit*, *Jane Eyre*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, *Animal Farm*, and *Johnny Tremain*—the six classics that U.S. secondary schools most often prescribe for summertime reading, according to a survey by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The New York Public Library publishes an annual list of recommended reading for teenagers. The list includes *Jane Eyre* (which the library describes as "Madness and love in an old mansion"), and also *The Old Man and the Sea* ("A three-day struggle with a giant fish") and *A Doll's House* ("When Nora slammed the door"). September **8**, International Literacy Day. **24**, Banned Books Week begins. **26**, the centennial of the birth of T. S. Eliot. Eliot did not live to witness the London premiere, in May of 1981, of *Cats*, which is based on his *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*. Had he done so, he might have chosen to amend his most famous line, "April is the cruelest month."



ENVIRONMENT

The summer's final generation of monarch butterflies, cued by the rapidly shortening daylight hours this month, stop gorging on nectar and begin their migration south. Hundreds of millions of them will make the trip, each one for the first time. The migration is believed to be unique in the insect world. In 1983, prompted by the destruction of habitats in the butterflies' wintering grounds, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature declared the monarch migration to be a "threatened phenomenon." Monarchs from east of the Rockies, navigating by means that remain unknown, head for the mountains west of Mexico City, where roosting sites are now being protected. Monarchs from west of the Rockies spend the winter in Southern California, where they appear to be fast losing ground to development.



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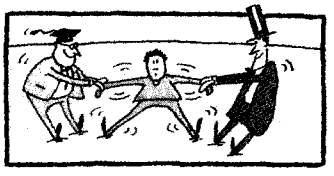
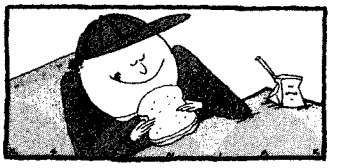
DEMOGRAPHICS

Many of the nation's most selective private colleges and universities this month will greet more black students than ever before. Harvard University received a record number of applications from blacks this year. But the number of blacks going to all colleges is actually declining, and the slippage is entirely attributable to black men. Overall, 26,000 fewer blacks attend college now than did in 1980, even though the number of black women in college has continued to grow year after year. Why are fewer black men pursuing higher education? Some educators cite competition from the armed forces; recruitment of black men has increased by some 15 percent in the past decade.



HEALTH & SAFETY

September is the month when most adults who need vaccination against influenza should get their shots; elderly people in communities with no early reports of flu are advised to wait several months to ensure that their level of immunity stays elevated through the end of the flu season, in April. Three major strains of influenza virus are on their way: A/Taiwan/1/86 (H1N1), A/Sichuan/2/87 (H3-N2), and B/Victoria/2/87. These are the strains employed in this year's vaccines. In a typical influenza epidemic year, of which there have been 19 from 1957 to 1986, the virus is responsible for some 10,000 "excess" deaths.



FOOD

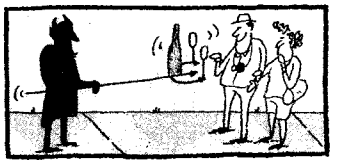
Some 27 million children will enter or return to elementary school this month, and if past trends hold, the item most often found in their lunch boxes will be a peanut-butter sandwich. According to the *MRCA Menu Monitor*, "peanut-butter-based sandwiches" make up 8.7 percent of "total carried lunch items." Following peanut butter, in order of decreasing popularity, are "cold-cut-based sandwiches," apples, cookies, "ham-based sandwiches," milk, potato chips, fruit juice, and "individual cake products." Americans in one year consume about 685 million pounds of peanut butter, enough to cover Bermuda to a depth of about a quarter inch.

SKIES

September **11**, New Moon, eclipsing the Sun for those along the east coast of Equatorial Africa, in parts of the Indian Ocean, and in the waters south of Australia and New Zealand. **22**, Autumnal Equinox. **25**, Full Moon, also known this month as the Harvest Moon.

GOVERNMENT

September **1**, a provision of the Competitive Equality Banking Act of 1987 becomes effective today, requiring that banks clear deposited checks within two business days if the checks are from local accounts, and within six business days if they are not. This will end the banks' practice of freezing such deposits for as long as three weeks even as the banks use the funds for lending and investment, and it will mean fewer checks bounced by people who mistakenly believed that they had sufficient funds in their bank accounts to cover those checks. American banks last year received $3.4 billion in bounced-check charges. Two years from now the periods of time for which local and nonlocal checks can be held by banks will diminish to at most one day and four days, respectively.



75 YEARS AGO

Samuel P. Orth, writing in the September, 1913, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "When a new Dante arises out of the ashes of modern poetry, he will fill a vast corner of hell with tourists, and the majority of them will have the image of Paris, the 'modern Babylon,' imprinted on their memory. . . . Everybody has gone to Paris for three hundred years, to taste the forbidden fruit. And Paris, with dainty conceit, has prepared elaborately and artistically the suggestive degeneracy which most of these tourists go to Paris particularly to see. Paris gives any one a boost toward the abyss, if he seeks it—and if he can pay for it."

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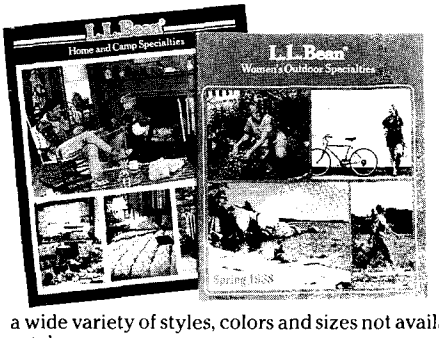

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REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES

TIME, PLEASE

Poetry today is easier to write but harder to remember.

—Stanley Kunitz

WHY DO SO MANY readers of new poetry feel that something is missing? One reason, I think, may be the dominance of the present tense. Others have pointed to the prevalence of the present in modern fiction also, but perhaps three quarters of all the new poetry that I read is cast in the present tense, indicative mood. Few poems show traces of the past emphatic ("In Xanadu did Kubla Khan/ A stately pleasure-dome decree. . . .") or of the subjunctive mood ("Had we but world enough, and time,/ This coyness, Lady, were no crime.") or of the present perfect ("I have done it again. One year in every ten/ I manage it. . . .") or of the simple past ("Because I could not stop for Death/ He kindly stopped for me.") or of the imperative mood ("At the round earth's imagin'd corners, blow/ Your trumpets, Angells. . . . ") or the future tense ("Shall I compare thee to a Summer's day?").

Many casual readers of today's poetry misunderstand their own discomfort and complain only of the absence of rhyme and meter. What really underlies their dissatisfaction, I think, is that so many contemporary poets lack conviction. They have lost some degree of belief in the validity of poetic utterance. Readers in the nineteenth century flocked to poetry. Was it because poets then were sure of what they were saying? "There was a time when meadow, grove and stream/ The earth, and every common sight,/ To me did seem/ Apparell'd in celestial light,/ The glory and the freshness of a dream." The present tense, in contrast, constrains us to hear only the voice of the watcher. The present indicative lets a poet stand a foot away from commitment, three or four feet away from identification, six feet away from declaration: "September silence sags over the field./ Faded summer denims flap with fatigue/ on a neighbor's clothesline." Contemporary poetry tends to cast the poet in the role of witness. Between the poet and the event falls a shadow: "The apparition of these faces in the crowd:/ Petals on a wet, black bough." Pound's split figure implies externality, irony, remoteness, alienation, impotence. It omits relationship, intimacy, interaction, community, and the passage of time. Poems descended from it and composed in the present indicative encourage us to draw back lest we plunge in, like J. Alfred Prufrock. They enable us to avoid recommendation, passion, announcement. Speaking in the present tense says that everything is usual but nothing is special.

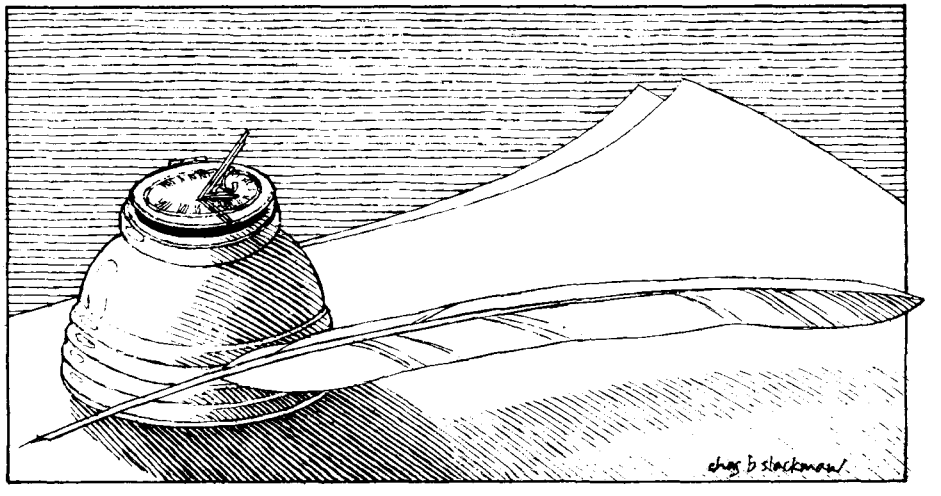
What of the poet's timeless roles: scribe, historian, cantor, prophet, musician, elegiast? The work of many poets these days suggests that they cannot respond to an invitation to participate in what they find alien. Their poems seem unable to imagine the actuality of absent or future hearers, and sound like letters slipped anonymously beneath a door, lacking confidence or character. But let a poet move into one of the past or future tenses, and the reader may credit the writer's belief that what happened happened, or that what will be will be.

"A poem may be worked over once it is in being," Robert Frost wrote,

> but may not be worried into being. Its most precious quality will remain its having run itself and carried away the poet with it. Read it a hundred times: it will forever keep its freshness as a metal keeps its fragrance. It can never lose its sense of a meaning that once unfolded by surprise as it went.

Hear the beauty of those verb tenses ringing against the weight of the nouns. Hear, too, the time dimension exfoliating in that last sentence. In such utterances we hear what is gone, for the moment, from poetry. Poets must learn to believe again that time is their friend.

—Peter Davison



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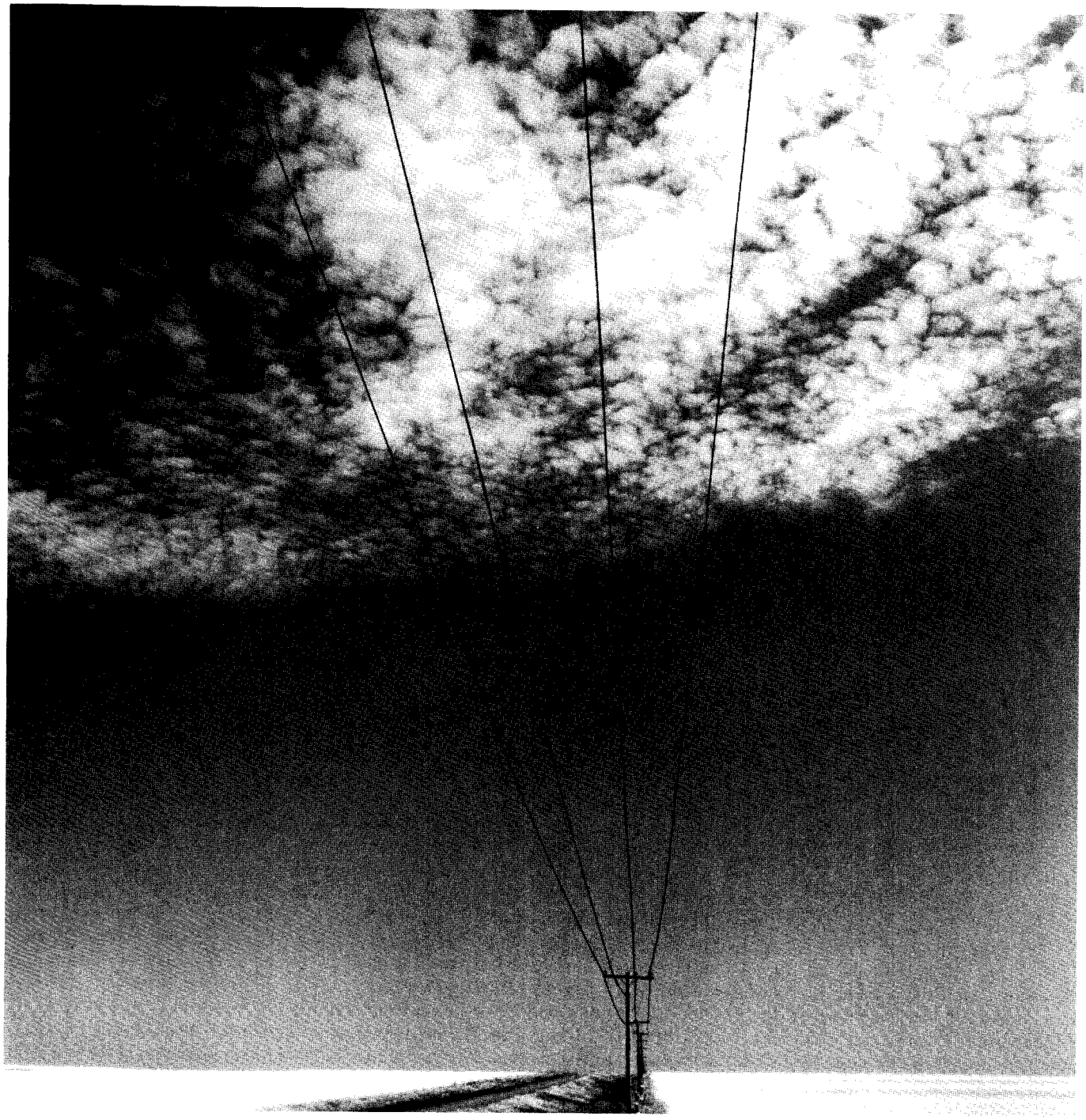

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AFGHANISTAN

DRIVEN TOWARD GOD

The eight-year war has transformed and enhanced the role of Islam, but Afghanistan is not another Iran

LATE LAST WINTER, when international statesmen were suggesting that the exiled septuagenarian King of Afghanistan, Zahir Shah, could be a force for unity in the country in the event of the withdrawal of Soviet troops, some 4,000 Afghan resistance fighters gathered in an isolated valley across the border in Pakistan. There, framed by the peaks of the Hindu Kush and the foothills of the Himalayas, they spent several hours chanting "Death to Zahir Shah! Long live the *mujahideen* ['holy Moslem warriors']! Long live Islam!" One fighter grabbed the microphone and declared, "So many *mujahideen* have been sacrificed for Islam that we don't want to be ruled by anyone except God." Although only four of the seven Pakistan-based Afghan resistance parties were represented at the rally, these four parties—all Islamic and all fundamentalist—were, and are, the four most powerful. Thus died, in the eyes of the *mujahideen*, the so-called Zahir Shah option. It was the victim of a religious rebellion that in fact broke out in Afghanistan more than a decade ago, before the Soviet invasion of 1979.

The Soviet Union has announced its intention to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by February 15, 1989, leaving behind a government in Kabul that, under pressure from the *mujahideen*, may soon collapse. As the overestimation of Zahir Shah's popularity showed, projecting the future of a post-Soviet Afghanistan is not a straightforward task, and it must begin with an understanding of the social and religious cataclysms that rocked the country prior to the Red Army's arrival. For the Soviet invasion was a well-nigh inevitable climax to a series of developments that dragged the Kremlin, which had for years been quietly expanding its influence in King Zahir's Kabul, deeper and deeper into Afghanistan's internal politics. Only the fundamentalist Muslims saw this clearly at the time.

As early as 1970 the fundamentalists had become alarmed at the rate at which the King was allowing Afghan Communists to penetrate the state bureaucracy. The fundamentalists were so alarmed that they began forming secret "Islamic cells" within the army. In charge of one of these cells was Ahmad Shah Massoud, who was later to become the *mujahideen* commander in the Panjshir Valley, northeast of Kabul, where at least six huge Soviet ground assaults, reinforced by aerial carpet bombing, would prove unable to dislodge him. Along with many other devout officers, Massoud fled Afghanistan in 1973, when a coup toppled the King and brought his avowedly leftist cousin, Mohammed Daoud, to power. By 1975 all of those destined to become the most powerful *mujahideen* leaders in the fight against the Soviets were in exile and preaching rebellion against the Kabul government, which they viewed as a godless force seeking to extend its dominion into the countryside (where the central government had always been weak) and to subvert age-old religious and tribal traditions. "Religion was the sole motivating factor behind the original *mujahideen* uprising," says Farouk Adam Khan, a Pakistani lawyer who, like many Afghans, is an ethnic Pathan—one of a score of ethnic groups in the country.

However premature and paranoid the fundamentalists' warnings may have seemed at first, events subsequently bore them out. Like Zahir Shah before him, Daoud was eventually overwhelmed by the leftists whom he himself had encouraged. In April of 1978 Daoud was murdered and replaced by the Afghan Communist leader Nur Mohammed Taraki, who in the next six months signed some thirty bilateral agreements with the Soviet Union. For the first time in history Afghanistan's government began intruding significantly into village life. Land was confiscated, and local mullahs, or religious leaders, were taken away and imprisoned. This sparked a guerrilla rebellion in the Afghan countryside and the first large-scale migration of refugees to Pakistan. When the Red Army finally invaded, after another local Communist coup, the immediate consequence was to drive tens of thousands of volunteers into the arms of fundamentalist guerrilla commanders like Massoud and *maulavia* (high-ranking mullahs) like Yunus Khalis.

Rather than hijack a broad-based national uprising, as the ayatollahs did in Iran, the Afghan fundamentalists took control of a rebellion that they themselves had made possible. Islam quite naturally became the principal medium of political expression against the Soviets. And the chaos and destruction of the war, Yasir Abdul Rahman, a professor at Kabul University, told me, "drove the people even further toward God, as it was the only thing left for them."

BY THE MOST conservative estimates, the eight-year-long war between the Afghan guerrillas and the Soviets has resulted in the deaths of more than a million Afghan civilians and combatants, out of a total population at the war's outbreak of some 15 million. About five million people have been driven into exile in Iran and Pakistan, and another two million have been internally displaced. The fabric of village life, with its kinship patterns and power structures based on land tenure, has been replaced by the impersonal structure of the refugee camp. Islam is the principal social institution to have survived the Soviet invasion, and in the opinion of one Afghan psychiatrist I spoke to not long ago, Dr. Azam Dadfar, this simple fact has amplified religion's psychological importance among the refugees. Also favoring the fundamentalists has been the flight of many Western-educated Afghan intellectuals to Europe and America, which has removed most secularizing influences from the refugee communities in

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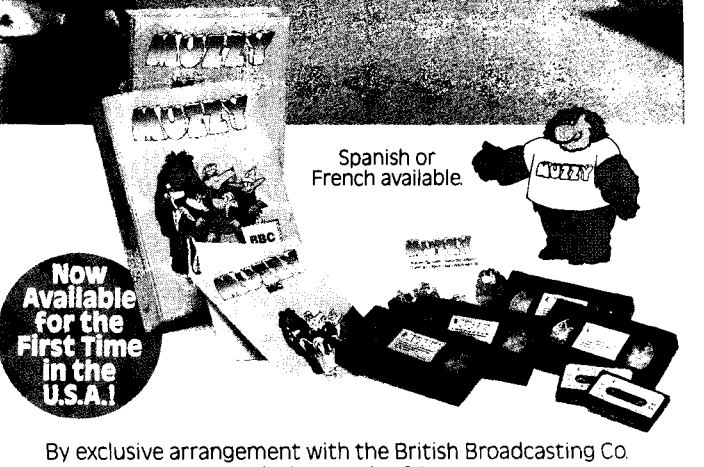

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Pakistan. With the *khans* (big landowners) and *maliks* (village headmen) deprived by exile of their local power bases, the Islamic clergy has risen quickly and easily to the top of the refugee hierarchy, to a place alongside the resistance commanders.

The mullahs and *maulavia* have used their newly established authority to try to protect Afghan culture from what they see as the corrupting influences of Pakistan. Pakistan, though officially an Islamic republic, enjoys a life-style that is less chaste and conservative than that of Afghanistan, where strict adherence to religious precepts is the seemingly natural outgrowth of a harsh mountain existence. Living in the crowded, polluted plains of Pakistan "holds absolutely no attraction for the refugees," says Whitney Azoy, an American anthropologist and expert on Afghanistan. "They want to seal themselves off with their way of life intact."

Nothing embodies this attitude better than the institution of purdah (literally, "curtain" in Persian), whereby women are kept hidden from the outside world behind closed doors and gossamer veils. In the villages they left behind, where almost everyone was related, women could work all day in the fields in full view of the men and have no need of a veil. But in Pakistan, amid thousands of strangers, Afghan women rarely go out in public, and when they do they are covered from head to toe. "In our own country, I don't care if our women wear miniskirts," one refugee acquaintance said to me, "but in Pakistan I don't want even to see them in the streets."

Education provides another example of the refugees' insular attitude. Secular subjects like the natural sciences and the pre-Islamic history of Afghanistan have been struck from the curriculum in most refugee schools, which now provide mainly a Koranic education. Traditions are, then, the glue that holds Afghan society together in exile, and it is questionable how easily the traditions will be discarded after the refugees return home. Before the war, religion was indistinguishable from the other rituals of rural existence, and thus there was nothing especially political about it. But robbed of the certainties of village life, Afghan Islam has become more rigid and militant.

AFGHAN AND WESTERN scholars alike take pains to point out that the turning inward of the Afghan fundamentalists bears little resemblance to the experience of the Islamic radicals in Iran, Egypt, and elsewhere. Insofar as *fundamentalism* implies a political value system that is revolutionary and inevitably anti-Western, the term can be used to describe only a fringe element of the Afghan *mujahideen*. Olivier Roy, a French Orientalist and the author of *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, eschews the very word *fundamentalist* when discussing the Afghans; he prefers the labels *traditionalist* and *Islamist*. Roy is not merely spinning a semantic web. The reason that heavily thumbed copies of his book are ubiquitous in Pakistan is that it is the only piece of recent scholarship that articulates exactly what diplomats, journalists, and relief workers have observed firsthand about the Afghans.

Among Afghan fundamentalists, Roy writes, one finds neither a hatred of the West nor the anti-Semitism that is characteristic of Islamic radicals elsewhere. To some extent this is a matter of politics: the Afghans have been fighting the Soviets, not the West, and Palestinian groups are generally viewed by Afghans—rightly or wrongly—as pro-Soviet. But the Afghans' disinclination to hate the West and Israel has a deeper explanation—one that gets to the heart of what makes the Afghan *mujahideen* so different from all other fundamentalists and proponents of Third World liberation movements. As Roy explains it, the Afghans, unlike the Arabs, the Iranians, and many Africans, have never in their history been subjected to the kind of Western cultural penetration that can lead to humiliation and identity crises. Without those ingredients, anti-Western fanaticism can take hold only with difficulty. Between the invasion of the Mongols under Genghis Khan, in the thirteenth century, and that of the Soviets, in our own, no foreign invader was ever able to overrun Afghanistan, or very much affect its culture. The British invaded twice in the nineteenth century and once in the twentieth. They never got beyond the main roads, and each time they were driven out. Of all the Muslim peoples in the Middle and Near East, only the Arabs of North Yemen and the Anatolian Turks have proved as fierce and as successful as the Afghans in repelling foreign intruders.

Secure from the outside world, Afghanistan also never went through a process of Western-style industrialization. In Iran and Egypt fundamentalism emerged out of the urban slums, from among a newly created and rootless proletariat. In contrast, Afghan fundamentalists have in a cultural sense never left the village. "Though they now wear beards," Roy writes, "this does not mean that they have embarked upon that false search for tradition which is so often found in Iran, the Maghrib, and Egypt."

Roy's argument is embodied in the person of Yunus Khalis, the head of Hizb-i-Islami ("the Party of Islam"). Khalis is an archetypal Afghan fundamentalist, whom two decades of war and political unrest have improbably elevated to power. At first glance Khalis looks to be the Afghan equivalent of the Ayatollah Khomeini, only wilder. He wears a coiled turban and a fiery-red beard. At sixty-eight, he has two wives, the younger in her late twenties. He speaks no Western language. Appearances can be deceiving, however: at his first meeting with a United Nations special envoy, Diego Cordovez, in the Pakistani town of Peshawar last February, Khalis wore no shoes, but he proved to be an impishly sophisticated guest in the Oval Office (where he wore shoes), and he enjoys manipulating Western newsmen. At a recent press conference in Peshawar he said, through a translator, "I know how difficult it is to be a journalist. So my opening statement is going to answer all your questions so completely that you won't want to ask me anything afterward." Khalis then made a few brief remarks, stood up, and left the room. An American who is very close to him remarked, "Khalis knows that foreigners find him disarming, and he obviously relishes it." But what most clearly distinguishes Khalis from Islamic fundamentalists elsewhere is his toleration of different points of view. Unlike the clergy in Iran—whom he shuns—he acts like a man at peace with himself, and therefore with others.

Following the assassination, in Peshawar, last February, of Sayd B. Majrooh—a killing that remains unsolved—Khalis attended the funeral of the exiled University of Kabul professor and told the crowd that although he did "not always agree" with Majrooh's Westernized outlook, "Afghanistan needs intellectuals" like the slain professor "to help rebuild the country."

OF THE THREE other fundamentalist parties in the seven-party alliance, two espouse the same moderate politics that Khalis's does. The exception is a

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party that, confusingly, has the same name as the one that Khalis heads—Hizb-i-Islami. This party, however, is led by a thirty-nine-year-old former engineering student, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who is something of a firebrand. Khalis and Hekmatyar parted ways in 1979 before the Soviet invasion, and they share few values. Hekmatyar has cobra-like eyes, obvious charisma, and a totalitarian method of operation that the other *mujahideen* leaders reject. The atmosphere at his headquarters is sullen and intense. No one smiles. Like some Iranian and Arab radicals I have interviewed, Hekmatyar's lieutenants behave with a kind of stiff politeness that borders on outright rudeness. In nearly every remark they extol the virtues of "Brother Gulbuddin." Hekmatyar has built a tightly structured party apparatus that openly seeks to dominate the other parties in order to create an Islamic state under his leadership. His group stands accused of kidnapping and murdering foreign journalists and relief workers, and of interfering with the military operations of the other guerrilla parties. His financial backing has at times come from Pakistan, whose President, Mohammed Zia ul-Haq, while a staunch American ally, has employed the rhetoric of militant Islam to consolidate his rule. A Western diplomat told me recently, "Hekmatyar says his money comes from Allah, but in this case Allah's name is spelled *Z-i-a*."

Considering his ample resources, it is striking how little support Hekmatyar has been able to generate among Afghan refugees. According to Sayd Majrooh, whom I interviewed the day before he was assassinated, "Both Marxism and [Hekmatyar's brand of] fundamentalism are revolutionary and without roots in Afghan history. Each represents a strong, centralizing force, which Afghans—who have always resisted concentrations of power—completely reject." Distrust of central authority is the most emphatically recurring theme in Afghan history; strong government, as it exists in Iran and almost every other Middle Eastern state, has never existed in Afghanistan, where the terrain is impossibly mountainous and tribal authority is absolute. Many observers cite the relatively small number of *mujahideen* willing to fight for Hekmatyar as proof that the Afghans, when the Soviets complete their withdrawal, will not institute a coercive theocracy like Iran's.

The loose structure of the *mujahideen* alliance is, of course, a product of Afghanistan's centrifugal tendencies. While the experience of war has, in a broad sociological sense, fostered more cohesion—people for the first time are calling themselves Afghans rather than Pathans, Tajiks, Uzbeks, or Turkomans—the power established by individual *mujahideen* commanders in various parts of the country remains the only tangible administrative outcome of the fighting. Commanders like Massoud, in the Panjshir Valley; Abdul Haq, in and around Kabul; Ismail Khan, in the Herat region; and Jallaluddin Haqani, in Paktia, have emerged as de facto governors, with near total control over vast tracts of land. These commanders collect taxes and run schools and courts with the help of local *jirgas*, or councils. Though these men, and most other leaders, are officially aligned with one or another of the seven resistance parties, often these links are tenuous. For exam-

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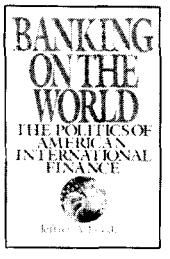

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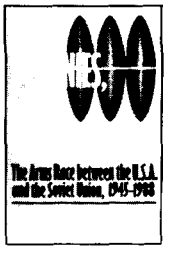

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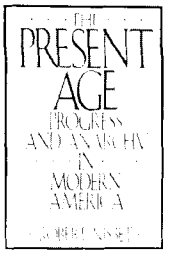

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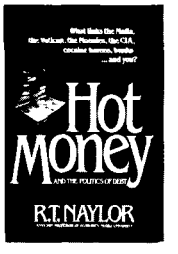

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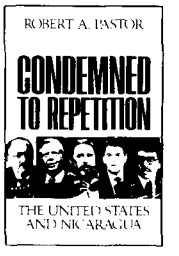

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ple, Massoud, a member of Jamiat-i-Islami (the Islamic Society), has not met with the Jamiat leader, Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, since the early days of the war. Massoud's rule, like that of Abdul Haq, Ismael Khan, and Jallaluddin Haqani, is based on his personal charisma and proven ability to rout the Russians. It is doubtful whether any new government established in Kabul would, in the foreseeable future, be able to supplant his authority or that of the other commanders.

Another source of disunity in the withdrawal period could be the almost one-million-strong Shia community that inhabits the Hazarajat region, in the very center of Afghanistan. The Shias are not strongly identified with any of the seven resistance parties. Owing in part, perhaps, to a Soviet policy of courting them as a potential fifth column, Hazarajat has been the quietest theater of the war. Some of the Shia militias also maintain close ties with Iran, a country viewed with deep suspicion by the *mujahideen*, because of Tehran's stinginess in providing material support and its abrasive way of doing business.

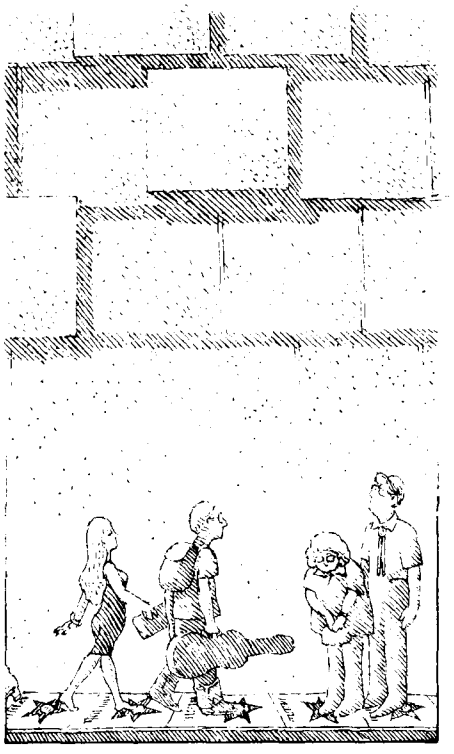
In addition to the problem posed by the Shias, Afghanistan will have to deal with a dearth of educated people and a surplus of small arms and militarized youths. The potential for civil conflict is great, and could provide the Soviets with a measure of leverage even after their troops pull out. Anarchy, not religious tyranny, appears to be the immediate risk.

There is no modern equivalent of what has been happening recently in Afghanistan. The closest parallel is a nineteenth-century one: the Greek war of independence against the Ottoman Turks. The nineteenth-century Greeks were at a stage of development similar to that of the Afghan peasants today. Like the Afghans, the Greeks were an unruly hodgepodge of guerrilla bands, fortified by a fervid religious faith (in their case, Orthodox Christianity). The Western powers that helped Greece achieve independence soon earned the nation's wrath by imposing a king and meddling in the country's internal affairs.

For the moment, pro-American feelings are widespread in Afghanistan. "The Americans, though they are not believers, helped us more than people of our own religion in the Middle East," one of Yunus Khalis's fighters said to me. If such an attitude is to last, American officials would do well to steer clear of Afghan politics. Attempts like the one to bring back Zahir Shah, to which the United States was a party, must not be repeated.

"The world must realize that Afghanistan can never be like Sweden," says Abdul Haq, the *mujahideen* commander in the area around Kabul. At best what it can be, he adds, is simply an Islamic state, but one that leaves its own people, and its neighbors, alone and at peace.

—Robert D. Kaplan



ENVIRONMENT

FIGHTING FOR CLEANER AIR

The use of automobiles must be regulated if Los Angeles is to win its war against smog

AMONG THE FIRST things to suffer was the parsley crop in the Los Angeles Basin during the Second World War. The leaves turned bronze and withered. Orange trees in the area began to produce less fruit at about the same time. And, perhaps most disturbing of all, rubber automobile tires began to crack while they were still new.

The prime suspect was the brownish haze that during the summers in the 1940s had begun to sting people's eyes and shroud the mountains surrounding the basin. The haze, which looked like a mixture of smoke and fog, was dubbed smog. Many Southern Californians put the blame on the region's huge refineries and their smoldering effusion. More than a decade passed—and the problem grew so serious that eye-irritation forecasts were the lead item in daily weather reports—before the experts agreed that smog's key ingredients were supplied in abundance by automobiles.

The term *smog* has stuck, though the air pollution plaguing most American cities is now known to consist of several different problems, including carbon monoxide, particulates, and, most intractable of all, ozone, a highly reactive form of oxygen that hampers lung performance and destroys the molecular bonds in leaves, plastics, and other materials. This colorless gas is a secondary pollutant, produced photochemically: it emerges in the atmosphere when sunlight irradiates a mixture of hydrocarbons and oxides of nitrogen, which are both among the major components of exhaust from engines fueled by gasoline. Smog contains hundreds of other, minor constituents. The chemical stew cooks in the sun, spinning off new substances in chain reactions that go on for days. Researchers so far have catalogued about a thousand different reactions in smog. These, combined with the vagaries of the weather, make smog a phenomenon so complex that supercomputers can only crudely simulate its behavior.

With its burgeoning population and perpetual sunshine, Los Angeles will most likely never be displaced as the smoggiest city in the nation. But the air in the basin today is cleaner than it has been in half a century. Lead and the compounds that made stinging eyes a hallmark of life in Los Angeles in the 1950s have been virtually eliminated. And in 1986 and 1987 only one inland suburb was hit with a second-stage smog alert—signifying a seriously health-threatening condition that occurs when the ozone level slips above .35 parts per million parts of air (ppm). In 1980 alone twenty-one such alerts occurred. The ozone level is so consistently high, however, that for five months out of every year some inland parts of the basin exceed the maximum federal ozone standard of .12 ppm.

Ozone is not nearly so severe a problem in any other city in the United States, but in 1987 sixty-eight urban areas had ozone levels in excess of the federal standard, which all cities were

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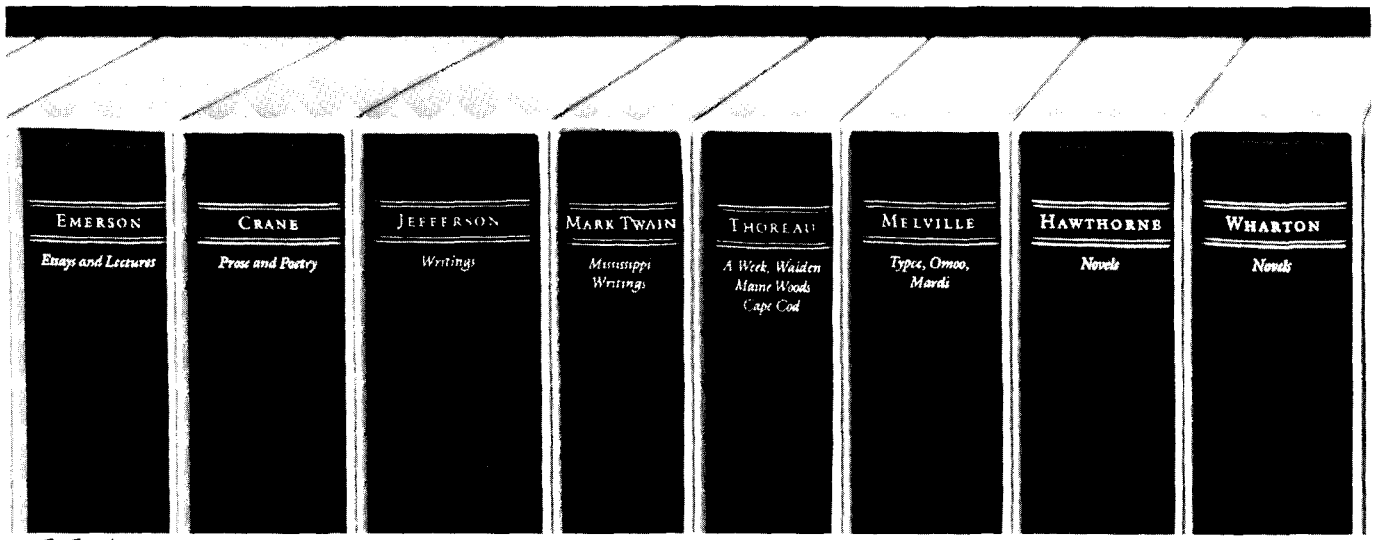

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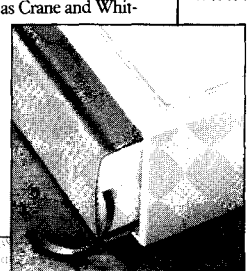

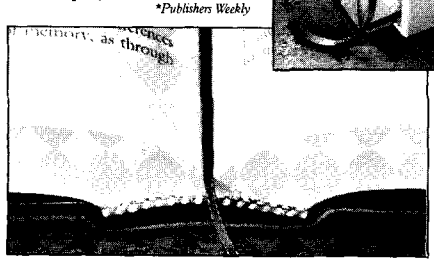

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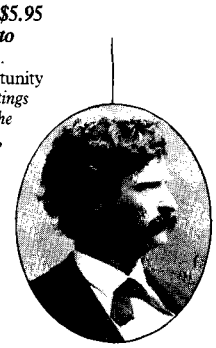

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supposed to have met by the end of the year, under an extended deadline of the Clean Air Act. Sunny, vehicle-clogged foreign metropolises like Mexico City and Athens now have the world's worst air. In Latin America and Europe, where cars are still largely exempt from emissions controls, automobile exhaust is a far greater contributor to the overall air-pollution problem than it is in the United States, according to Michael Walsh, a former director of the Environmental Protection Agency's motor-vehicle program and now an international air-pollution consultant.

Environmental regulators everywhere have found that smog is a wily adversary. It is so complex that some "solutions" have been found to exacerbate problems downwind. Even more troublesome, the single most important source of smog is the widely beloved automobile.

The machine itself—though not by a long shot those who drive it—was first brought under control in California. The California Motor Vehicle Control Board and later the California Air Resources Board forced the automobile industry to enter the unexplored world of crankcase blowback devices, afterburners, and catalytic converters; the Environmental Protection Agency eventually adopted California's tough emissions-control regimen. The cleanup has cut sharply emissions of nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide. And the eight million vehicles in the Los Angeles Basin today emit no more hydrocarbons than two and a half million vehicles in the basin emitted in 1954.

Such progress didn't come easily. From the days of the first discoveries about smog, scientists and regulators in Los Angeles and elsewhere have had to fight against public sentiment—often encouraged by the oil and automobile industries—which sought to exonerate the automobile.

Louis McCabe, Los Angeles's first smog commissioner, epitomized the spirit of the day. Formerly the "smoke commissioner" in St. Louis, McCabe was lured west in 1947, to become the first director of the newly created Los Angeles County Air Pollution Control District. He mounted a spirited attack on refineries, and then moved on to a new job after two years, confident that he had set the city on a course that would soon free it from smog. The burgeoning number of cars didn't matter, he believed. "I do not mean to imply that

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improperly operated and obsolete motor vehicles should be allowed to pollute the atmosphere; they should not," McCabe said at the first National Air Pollution Symposium, held in Pasadena in 1949, shortly after he had become the chief of the Office of Air and Stream Pollution for the Bureau of Mines. "But neither should folklore be encouraged that will place the onus of metropolitan-area atmospheric pollution on the automobile, without proof."

McCabe's actions during his tenure as smog commissioner were nonetheless beneficial. By 1954 the refineries in the Los Angeles Basin were exuding 250 tons of hydrocarbons a day, down from 650 tons a day in the 1940s. The smog, however, was much worse. Automobiles were producing four times more hydrocarbon emissions than oil-industry facilities. Still, few accepted the bitter truth about smog.

The basics of smog formation were first described in 1950, by Arie Jan Haagen-Smit, a chemist at the California Institute of Technology. Haagen-Smit had suspected early on that the haze wasn't emitted by anything but instead was created in the atmosphere. He mixed combinations of chemicals in flasks and placed them in the sun in a quest for the recipe for smog. When bent strips of rubber placed in flasks containing a concoction of hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides cracked within minutes of exposure to the sun, Haagen-Smit knew he had found what he was looking for.

At the time, many other experts were unconvinced by Haagen-Smit's theory about the photochemical origins of smog. Vance Jenkins, the research supervisor for the Union Oil Company of California, warned at a meeting of the American Petroleum Institute in 1952 that this "unproved speculation" of Haagen-Smit's would bring nothing but grief to the oil industry and, further, that it should be immediately abandoned in favor of a theory that "correctly evaluates the contributions of automotive exhausts" to smog. "Don't look now, but that shadow you see is not from a smoking stack," Jenkins said in an address to members of the API's refining division. "It is the shadow of the policeman who already has his hand on the shoulder of the petroleum industry in Los Angeles County."

By the mid-1950s, however, the evidence supporting Haagen-Smit's theory was unequivocal. The theory received unanimous support at scientific confer-

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A "Palestinian Homeland"

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Once again, strife and trouble have erupted in Israel and in the territories administered by Israel. And many thoughtful people believe that these problems could be laid to rest, that tranquility could be restored if the "Palestinians" had their own country. That homeland would be Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza strip. Its capital would be Jerusalem or, at the very least, its "Arab sector."

What are the facts?

■ First of all, some definitions are in order. The Arabs living in "Palestine" — which is Jordan, Israel and the areas administered by Israel — like to refer to themselves as "Palestinians", and to the Jews living there as "Jews". But all inhabitants of Palestine obviously are Palestinians — either Arab or Jewish Palestinians. By only referring to themselves, but not to the Jews, as "Palestinians", the Arabs attempt to convey legitimacy on themselves and illegitimacy on the Jews, despite the uninterrupted presence of Jews in all parts of Palestine since Biblical times.

■ In 1948, the Palestinian state of Jordan, in an act of naked agression, invaded the just-born state of Israel. It managed to occupy Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the eastern part of Jerusalem. For the next 19 years, and until 1967 when the territory came under Israeli administration after the Six-Day War, Judea/Samaria was part of the Kingdom of Jordan. During that entire time, nothing was ever heard of "Palestinian" peoplehood. The thought of creating a second "Palestinian" state in the "West Bank", in addition to the Palestinian state of Jordan, did not occur to anyone — certainly not to the "Palestinians", not to any of the 22 Arab countries, and not to the rest of the world.

■ By the relentless drumbeat of Arab propaganda, the impression has taken hold that the "Palestinians" in Judea/Samaria are a distinct and unique people. But that just isn't so. The concept of separate "Palestinian" peoplehood is a new one. It did not exist before 1967. The reality is that the so-called "Palestinians" in this area are exactly the same people — undifferentiated in dialect, dress, social customs or anything else — from the Palestinian Arabs in Jordan. A second Palestinian peoplehood is a myth. It was created for the purpose of laying claim to Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") in the first instance, and for its use as a launching pad for the destruction of Israel proper thereafter.

■ With the help of President Carter, Menachem Begin of Israel and Anwar Sadat of Egypt signed the Camp David Accords. In line with these Accords, Israel returned the entire Sinai Peninsula — including the valuable oil fields it had developed, two of the world's most advanced military bases, and several cities — to Egypt, in exchange for peace. And in the Camp David Accords it was agreed that the inhabitants of Judea/Samaria and the Gaza Strip would get autonomy and that during a five-year period, the final status of the territories would be negotiated. But that process never got started. Why not? To the Arabs, the Camp David Agreement is unacceptable, because it implies recognition of Israel. The Egyptians were drummed out of the Arab League, and most Arab countries broke relations with them, for having committed the unpardonable sin of making peace with Israel. For good measure, Anwar Sadat was assassinated by his own countrymen — a destiny shared with any other Arab who has dared to advocate recognition of or peace with Israel.

■ The real and never changing purpose of the Arabs is not the attainment of "the rights of the Palestinian people", autonomy in the administered territories, or even a state of their own in what is now called the "West Bank". The real purpose has never changed. It is the dismantling and the destruction of the state of Israel. To the Arabs, having a state of "infidels" on what they consider "sacred Arab soil" is a religious crime. Because of that, the Kurds, the Druze, the Copts, the Armenians, the Maronites and other minorities have all been brutally repressed and periodically massacred by the Moslem Arabs. But the Arabs' greatest hatred is directed toward the Jews. The wished-for establishment of a "Palestinian" state on the "West Bank" would be the first step toward the "final solution" desired by the Arabs. The PLO has never deviated, never wavered from that. The destruction of Israel, its "secularization" or its Lebanonization, are the unswerving core dogma of the PLO.

The "Palestinians" are not a distinct people. They are simply Arabs. They chafe under Israeli administration, however benevolent it may be. Scores of ethnic groups live under such conditions, many of them — in contrast to the Arabs under Israeli administration — under political duress, discrimination against them, and with their religion, language and identity suppressed. But the Palestinian Arabs do have a homeland. It's Jordan. Jordan is by far the largest part of Palestine. The Arabs living there are overwhelmingly Palestinians. The ultimate resolution of the problems of the Palestinian Arabs of the "West Bank" — a resolution that satisfies the irreducible security requirements of Israel and the national aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs — can only come about by direct negotiations. Under pressure of the PLO and of Arab rejectionists, the Palestinian Arabs have so far refused to participate in any such negotiations. Israel has been ready for them for over twenty years.

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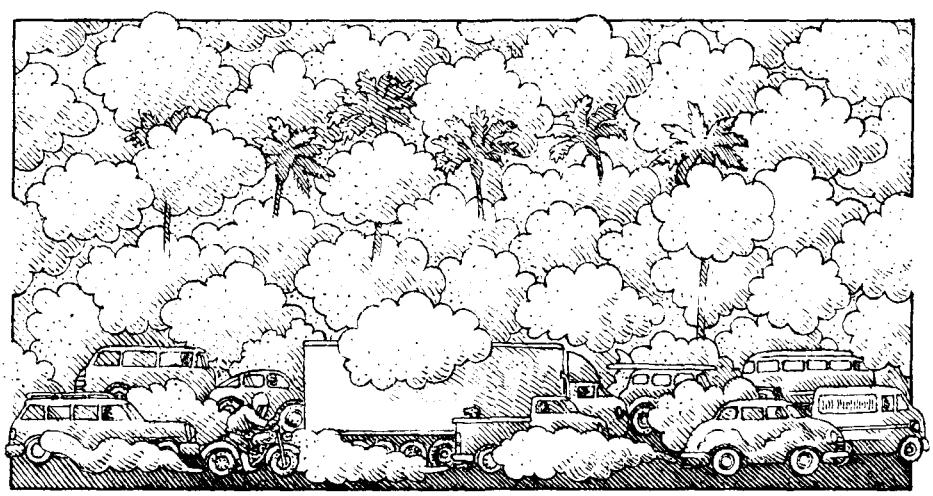
ences in 1955 and 1956. But neither that development nor the worst-ever smog siege, in October of 1954, which caused children's eyes to swell and brought angry housewives with placards and gas masks into the streets of Pasadena, stopped the search for a magic cure that would leave the automobile untouched.

Some visionaries insisted that the smog could be disposed of simply by breaking the temperature inversion that hangs over Los Angeles like a lid of hot air, created by the sunshine and held in place by the high-pressure zone that prevails for three quarters of the year. Morris Neiburger, the senior meteorologist at the Air Pollution Foundation, and later the chairman of the meteorology department at UCLA, brought the promoters of such grandiose plans to reality. You could break the inversion by shooting cool air down through it with helicopters, Neiburger said, in a paper published in 1957, referring to one proposal for doing away with smog, among the dozens he had carefully studied. But to reduce the concentration of pollutants by half would take ten large helicopters per square kilometer across the 4,000-square-kilometer basin.



Neiburger's arithmetic also put to rest notions about deploying huge fans to suck the smog out of the basin through "smoqueducts" over, or tunnels through, the mountains. Neiburger estimated that the polluted air beneath the inversion could weigh anywhere from 200 million to two billion tons, depending on how low the base of the inversion dipped on a given day. This meant that every day the fans would have to move smog weighing at least twice as much as all the steel produced in the United States in a year.

Among a scattered band of smog researchers the search continues for an ultimate solution. Julian Heicklen, a well-respected atmospheric chemist at Pennsylvania State University, has suggested that a smog-inhibiting chemical could be released into the air to upset the photochemistry of ozone formation. But his idea has never gotten a practical field test. "Many of us have a somewhat negative reaction to a proposal to release something into the air to solve a problem caused by releasing something into the air in the first place," Derek C. Montague, an atmospheric scientist at the University of Wyoming, observes.

SMOG REGULATORS and scientists have developed enough respect for smog to know that it should be attacked warily. Some of the first attempts at fighting it were disasters. For example, air pumps, required for the first time, in California, on 1966-model cars, were designed to produce hotter combustion that would leave fewer unburned hydrocarbons as waste. Indeed, that's what happened. But the output of nitrogen oxides—created in larger quantities by high-temperature combustion—doubled. (Chemists later learned that one of the nitrogen oxides undergoes a photochemical reaction in the atmosphere to form nitric acid, a substance that forms a brand of acid rain and fog as destructive in some areas as the more-familiar sulfuric-acid variety.)

The mistakes didn't deter California regulators from trying new ideas. The California Air Resources Board was created in 1967 to set emissions standards for mobile sources of pollution. Its increasingly stringent requirements eventually forced most automakers wishing to do business in California after 1975 to equip their cars with catalytic converters designed to cut hydrocarbon emissions. One vehement opponent of the proposed standards was the oil industry—which faced having to scour every bit of lead from tanks and pipelines in order to produce the pure unleaded fuel the devices needed. "I saw a president of a major oil company sit there and say we couldn't use catalysts because the oil industry couldn't switch to unleaded fuel—he said it couldn't be done," recalls an atmospheric chemist who served on a panel of advisers for the ARB when the tough new standards were proposed. "Well, guess what? That company, which shall remain unnamed, sells unleaded fuel."

The three-way catalytic converters now required throughout the United States and Canada, and in several other countries, have drawbacks—primarily the need for regular checkups to be sure they are working, and the expense of replacement if they aren't. But they do cut emissions of hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, and carbon monoxide. Catalytic converters may well have saved the city of Los Angeles. "If all the cars on the road today were 1950s cars," says Art Davidson, a spokesman for the South Coast Air Quality Management District, parts of Los Angeles "would actually be uninhabitable in the summer when the ventilation is bad."

Some cities elsewhere in the world are rapidly heading toward that point. "It's hard to get precise air-quality data, but it appears that Mexico City exceeds our federal ozone standard every day of the year," says Michael Walsh, the former director of the EPA's motor-vehicles program. During the temperature inversions that frequently hover over the city in winter, ozone levels soar above the .40 ppm level. "Many people in Mexico City suffer from air pollution," Walsh says. "We're not talking about subtle effects, either."

A number of other cities fall into the same class as Mexico City—Athens, Bangkok, and Santiago, Chile, for example. Many others, including New Delhi, aren't far behind. The streets of the Indian capital are clogged with more than a million vehicles, and 300 more join the throng each day. Their exhaust is every bit as noxious as that produced by the American cars of thirty or forty years ago. "It's getting worse every day," Jag Pravesh Chandra, the head of the Delhi Executive Council and the top elected official in New Delhi, recently told *The New York Times*. "At this rate, Delhi will

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become an unlivable city." Though half the air pollution in New Delhi is attributable to vehicle exhaust, India has no auto-emissions regulations at all.

Most of the countries of Europe, where sulfates from burning coal have traditionally been the most troublesome air pollutant, have also long hesitated to attack their significant automotive-smog problems. The European Community just last December capped years of debate on auto-emissions controls by adopting an advisory measure recommending that each member country require three-way catalytic converters on cars with engines of two liters or more—but only about 10 percent of the cars on the road in Europe have engines that large.

California's air-pollution-control rules remain the most comprehensive in the world. In more than two decades of steadily tougher auto-emissions regulations almost all of the pollution that can economically be squeezed out of gasoline-powered-engine exhaust has been removed. The South Coast Air Quality Management District was the first agency to mandate such things as vapor-recovery systems on gasoline pumps and emissions controls for dry-cleaning shops. It is now zeroing in on smog-producing emissions from bakeries, swimming-pool heaters, and open-pit barbecues.

In an aggressive new program, launched last January by the AQMD's governing board (which consists of eleven representatives selected by governmental entities in the region), fleet operators, such as bus companies and rental-car firms, will be required to buy cars running on electricity or cleaner-burning fuels starting in 1993. However, methanol, the best alternative currently available, is far from a panacea. Methanol-fueled vehicles emit the same quantity of nitrogen oxides that gasoline-powered ones do. And in lieu of hydrocarbons they spew aldehydes, which are quite reactive photochemically and also probably carcinogenic. Refinements of methanol-fueled engines may mitigate these problems.

The array of technological controls, for the most part already implemented and proved effective in Los Angeles, is good news for cities around the world that have only recently acknowledged their smog problem and that have just begun searching for solutions. But Los Angeles has lost confidence that purely

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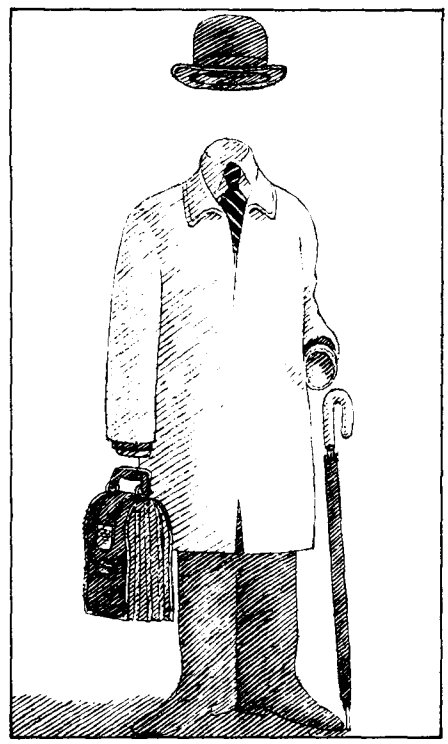
technological solutions will be enough. From now on, the air can only get worse—population growth in the basin over the next twenty years is projected at four to five million—unless the AQMD plunges into a new frontier of regulatory behavior.

Another bold initiative launched by the AQMD board in January promises to shift the brunt of regulatory attention from cars onto their drivers. Controls on driving are old hat in other parts of the world, where cars have never become most people's sole means of urban transportation. Singapore, for example, bans most private vehicles from large sections of its downtown. Santiago uses a license-plate code system to keep 20 percent of all cars off the roads on any given day. In Los Angeles this past summer, phase one of a car-pool rule was scheduled to begin. Aimed at increasing the car-occupancy rate, hitherto 1.1 passengers per car, the rule forced every business with a hundred or more employees to set up a ride-sharing program and offer its employees positive incentives to join a car pool, take public transportation, or ride a bicycle. The future will hold far more than that in the way of controls on driving. Regulators are discussing the possibility of ordering staggered work hours, banning drive-through service at fast-food restaurants, and even suing the state department of transportation to force it to set aside more freeway lanes for cars with more than one occupant (after considerable wrangling, some lanes have recently been set aside on a few of the most crowded freeways).

Angelenos won't readily give up the mobility that the automobile offers. Previous AQMD boards have shied away from car-pool rules, multi-passenger (or "diamond") lanes, and other controls that would constrain the Southern California life-style. But the region's smog regulators have overcome difficult obstacles in the past. And the current board, goaded by the threat of sanctions, including growth controls, if the region doesn't continue to move toward meeting the EPA's guidelines, appears undaunted by the toughest opposition yet, in its latest campaign. "We're interested in. . . creating a situation where people do less driving to live their lives," said James Lents, the AQMD executive director, at a press conference last fall. "It's a very new area for us . . . and one that will touch every aspect of life in the Los Angeles Basin."

—Mark Thompson



WASHINGTON

THE FIFTH MAN

A reflection, prompted by an obituary, on a famous episode in the annals of espionage

THE DEATH IN MOSCOW last spring of Harold Adrian Russell (Kim) Philby closed a chapter in the most celebrated espionage case of the postwar years—but not the book. Philby, of course, was the most prominent of the Britons who were recruited in the late 1920s and the 1930s while they were students, many at Cambridge, to serve the Soviet Union as they penetrated the British government and its intelligence services. The best-known members of this "Cambridge Comintern," after Philby, were Donald Maclean, Guy Burgess, and Anthony Blunt—the last publicly identified only in 1979 as the long-suspected "fourth man." Burgess and Maclean fled to Moscow in 1951, and Philby joined them there (from Beirut) in 1963. These four men have now all died, leaving behind the question, Was there a still-unidentified fifth man, of comparable importance? As a career intelligence officer and one who has known many of those whose lives were touched by the Philby affair, I have thought frequently about this mystery. Philby's death called it to mind once again.

THE CONVENTIONAL wisdom, buttressed by Philby in his memoirs (*My Silent War*), is that in February of 1951 Philby, who was working at the British Embassy in Washington, learned through his official duties in the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) that the net was closing around Donald Maclean—then the head of the American Department at the Foreign Office, in London. Philby alerted his embassy colleague and fellow Soviet agent Guy Burgess, who was then living in Philby's house, and, with Soviet concurrence, induced or directed Burgess to go to London to warn Maclean. (Burgess accomplished this by getting himself arrested three times in one day, for speeding, causing the ambassador to send him home.) The official version of what followed is that a tip from Philby to Maclean, through Burgess, prompted Burgess and Maclean to flee to France on Friday, May 25, 1951, and ultimately to the Soviet Union. Maclean had been scheduled to be brought in three days later by MI5, Britain's FBI, for interrogation by William (Jim) Skardon, the man who had skillfully wrested a full confession from the atomic spy Klaus Fuchs, and under whose questioning the already very tense Maclean was bound to crack. In 1979 Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher stated flatly in response to questions in the House of Commons, "It was Philby who warned Burgess to tell Maclean that he was about to be interrogated." This is a neat and tidy account, with no loose ends. Its only defect is that it is implausible. Though Philby undoubtedly did warn Burgess, and Burgess warned Maclean, and though plans were thus readied for the pair's escape if necessary, Philby is *not* a logical source for the "go" order that actually precipitated their flight.

To begin with, Burgess showed absolutely no sense of urgency about getting back to London after his February conversation with Philby. He did not leave Washington until April, took the *Queen Mary* instead of flying, and did not reach London until May 7. In behavior both Burgess and Maclean were decidedly erratic, but for the next eighteen days—through the morning of May 25—neither conducted himself in any way out of the ordinary or gave any outward hint that he was contemplating or preparing for flight. Quite the contrary. Maclean's rocky marriage was in one of its up phases. Maclean and his American wife, Melinda, were again living together—

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near Tatsfield, a suburban village in Kent—and she was expecting their baby in early June. Burgess had made plans to spend May 25–27 on a naughty weekend in France with a new male friend, an American whom he had met on the *Queen Mary*.

On Thursday, May 24, senior officers of SIS, MI5, and the Foreign Office had a long discussion about Maclean during which it was finally decided to bring him in for questioning by Skardon—if the Foreign Secretary, Herbert Morrison, approved. A meeting with Morrison was scheduled for the following morning. It was also decided, however, that even if Morrison gave his approval, as expected, Maclean would not actually be picked up until Monday, May 28. The official explanation for this decision was that at the time it was not considered a significant delay—not significant enough, at any rate, to disturb anyone's weekend.

THAT STORY HAS always rung at least a quarter tone off. It made no professional sense not to bring Maclean in on Friday, as soon as Morrison gave his approval, to let Maclean fret over the weekend and then face a cool and rested Skardon on Monday morning. I am inclined to believe, as others have been, that it took deft maneuvering on someone's part to get the process delayed by this critical weekend without raising any eyebrows.

May 25, 1951, was Donald Maclean's thirty-eighth birthday. He had a late, leisurely lunch with friends, whom he made plans to see again in early June, went to his club for another couple of drinks and there cashed a check (for only five pounds), briefly returned to the Foreign Office, and then caught his normal commuter train, the 5:19 from Charing Cross (where MI5's "watchers" abandoned him, as was their custom). Absolutely nothing in Maclean's behavior on that day gave any hint that he was thinking about leaving England.

On that same fateful Friday, Guy Burgess slept until around 9:00 in his London flat, was given a cup of tea by his live-in lover of many years, Jack Hewit, and made some phone calls to other friends, subsequently interrogated, scheduling several future social appointments. Nothing in Burgess's demeanor or behavior suggested that he then had anything on his mind except the weekend he had made plans to spend with his new American conquest.

At some point near or shortly after

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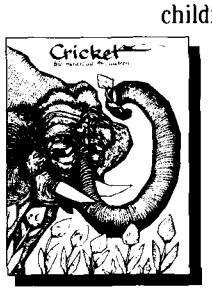

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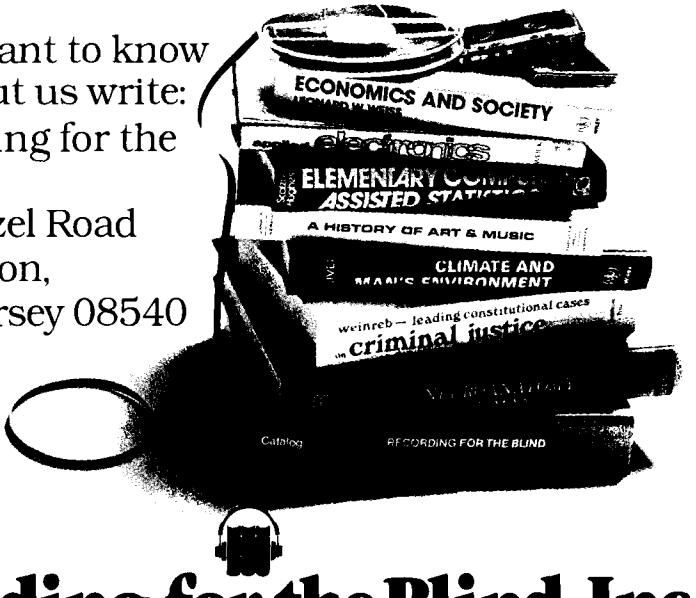

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10:00 A.M. a senior MI5 officer and the head of Foreign Office security held a brief meeting with Herbert Morrison, in the Foreign Secretary's office, at which Morrison promptly approved Maclean's interrogation. At almost the same time (the sequence here is not entirely clear) something—presumably a warning delivered in person or by phone—suddenly changed Burgess's whole pattern of behavior. From that moment the previously languid, unconcerned Burgess was a whirling dervish.

In a state of obvious agitation, Burgess kept a 10:30 A.M. appointment with his American friend in the lobby of a Green Park hotel, ten minutes' walk from Burgess's flat, and explained that their weekend might have to be scrubbed, because, as the American later said that Burgess had explained, "a young friend of mine in the Foreign Office is in serious trouble. I am the only one who can help him." Burgess promised to call the American back, but never did. He rented a car, bought a suitcase, packed an assortment of clothes, grabbed £300 in cash and some savings certificates—plus his treasured copy of Jane Austen's collected novels, and Hewit's overcoat—drove to Tatsfield, had dinner with Donald and Melinda Maclean at their home, and then took Maclean to the Southampton dock. Burgess and Maclean abandoned the car and were the last two passengers to board the S.S. *Falaise*, the midnight ferry to St. Malo, in France.

WHATEVER CONTINGENCY plans had been made by Burgess at least for Maclean's eventual departure (Burgess is known to have been working with Blunt on the matter, and their Soviet controller, Yuri Modin, was in London, apparently to assist), it is most unlikely that the Friday-morning alert came to Burgess, in London, from Philby, in Washington, either directly or indirectly (by way of the Soviets). Barely possible, perhaps, but most unlikely. From across the Atlantic, five time zones removed, Philby could hardly have kept abreast of a fluid situation in London, even if he had had virtually instant access to all relevant official cable traffic received from England. In any event it would have been operational folly for Philby to use the telephone in this situation, especially to call Burgess, particularly before the days of direct dialing. Any Washington-to-London call would have had to go through at least two operators, either

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or both of whom might have kept call logs.

Despite Prime Minister Thatcher's 1979 statement, it is much more plausible that the source for Burgess's May 25 alert was not Philby but someone in London—not Blunt, then an art historian, no longer in MI5, but rather someone in a position to *know*. Only in a bad novel would any such warning, initiated from Washington, reach Burgess just about the time that Morrison was approving Maclean's interrogation. The actual warning call to Burgess could, of course, have easily been made by a London-based Soviet agent, or by some other Soviet agent, but even if this is what happened, it is still more likely that someone in London, rather than Philby, apprised the Soviets that Maclean was to be interrogated the following Monday.

Burgess and Maclean's last-minute escape is the most dramatic sign that there may have been a fifth man, but it is far from the only sign. A host of allegations by defectors, of communications intercepts, and of inexplicably botched or compromised MI5 counterespionage operations all point to a similar conclusion.

If there actually was such a fifth man, the pool of serious candidates, with the requisite access and seniority, is very small. Indeed, it probably consists of no more than three people.

One is Guy Liddell, who was the deputy director general of MI5 from 1947 until he retired, in 1952. He, Burgess, and Blunt were friends, and Liddell was very much a part of the hothouse wartime circle revolving around Victor Rothschild's 5 Bentinck Street flat, in which Burgess and Blunt both lived. During the war Liddell ran MI5's counterespionage division, where Anthony Blunt was his personal assistant. Philby had a high regard for Liddell, whom he described in *My Silent War*—with Empsonian ambiguity—as "an ideal senior officer for a young man to learn from." In 1944 Liddell assisted Philby in the successful bureaucratic knifing of Philby's then superior, Felix Cowgill, so that Philby could become the head of SIS's expanding counterintelligence effort (which Philby terms his "Fulfillment"). Liddell, however, was greatly admired, professionally and personally, and has many staunch defenders. These include Sir Dick White, Philby's nemesis in both MI5 and MI6, both of which White headed, and Peter Wright (of *Spycatcher* fame), one of the most avid of all mole-hunters.

The two others are Graham Mitchell and Sir Roger Hollis. In 1951 Mitchell was in charge of counterespionage; he became deputy director general of MI5 (under Hollis) in 1956 and retired in 1963. He drafted the patently mendacious, demonstrably erroneous 1955 white paper on the Burgess-Maclean defection. On the strength of that document the Foreign Secretary, Harold Macmillan, gave Philby what the latter would call the happiest day of his life by publicly affirming Philby's innocence in the House of Commons—declaring, in a statement that Mitchell helped draft, that Philby was not the third man ("if indeed, there was one"). Hollis became deputy in 1953 and moved up in 1956 to be director general until his retirement, in 1965. Mitchell and Hollis were the subject of a series of investigations during the 1960s. Both were eventually declared innocent of any wrongdoing.

As noted above, the official position of Her Majesty's Government is that Burgess was warned by Philby, period; that Hollis and Mitchell have been investigated and exonerated (Liddell has never been subjected to formal scrutiny); and that these matters are now closed. Closed they will remain, at least officially. For different but, in each case, strong political reasons, neither the Conservative nor the Labour Party would want to re-open this painful chapter in British history, or would see any point in doing so.

In a larger sense, however, the Philby affair, with all it connotes, remains wide open—and will stay open for a long time, perhaps perpetually. The literature on the subject is voluminous (a partial bibliography would fill several pages) and continually growing. It seems unlikely, however, that the full truth will ever be known or that the matter will ever be laid totally to rest. Serious students will doubtless always be divided with respect to many key points. There will probably always be disputes about the motives of the people involved, about the real significance and impact of their activities—and about their legacies, if any, in the form of continuing penetrations.

As Kim Philby disappears into the mists of memory, the conspiracy that bears his name has assumed its rightful place among that small group of historical conundrums about which our curiosity seems destined never to wane.

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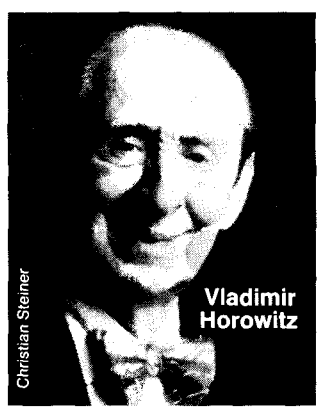

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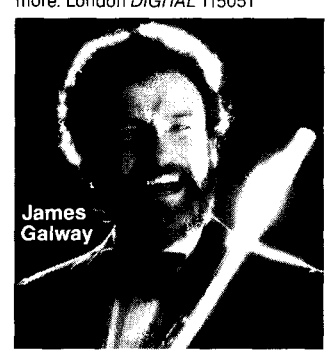

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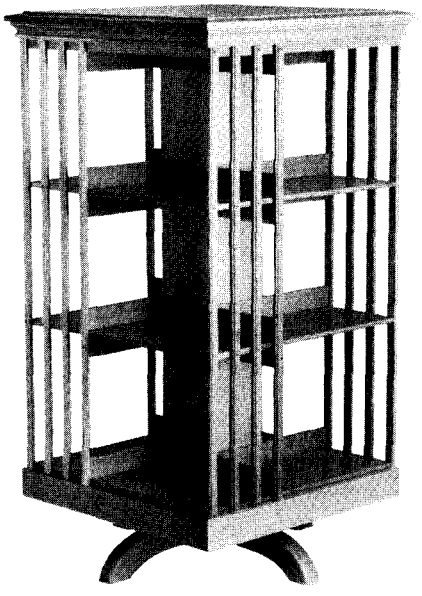

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GONE WITH THE WIND is a novel of war and Reconstruction. My fear is that the sequel will begin in pique and deconstruction.

It is either 1890 or 1980, and a frowsy, dispirited Scarlett is cranking out a metafictional memoir of her declining years—or is she? Certainly the characters keep talking back to her, calling her wayward and headstrong and coquettish, but does she put these words into their mouths or do they speak them of their own accord so as to cast their narrator in a more interesting light? Whatever is going on, it is a mess and a disgrace, and nobody is making any bones about *that* except old General Reader, a recurrent voice reduced to a litany of "Sho nuff, I reckon. I don't rightly know."

Rhett is a character-within-a-character (people keep asking him whether anyone ever tells him he looks like Clark Gable), who is determined to get out of character altogether. He fancies himself an earnest but ineffective reformer. He wears an anachronistic (whichever year it is) GIVE A DAMN button and a T-shirt that says *TODAY* IS ANOTHER DAY, but Scarlett stamps her foot and won't hear of it.

"I'll tell you what your trouble is, Scahlett," he says. "You think you're omniscient."

"She's not even the first person," sniffs Belle Watling, who is tired of being essentially good-natured, and owns hotels.

"Lawsy, Miss Scahlit, I don't know nothin' 'bout bein' no stereotype," Prissy says. "I am a human being with my own inner feelings and aspirations. Or am I just little blips of ink?"

Ashley Wilkes has gotten so sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought that he has decided nobody can say anything that signifies anything substantial to anybody else. And that's exactly what he keeps telling everybody all the time.

Aunt Pittypat, become extremely literary, exists only to toss in remarks like "The authah of *Black Mischief* on his way home from Brideshead. Give up? Waugh between estates."

Melanie sports an adjustable cap that says TOO SWEET FOR WORDS and has taken to going out and shooting everyone she can find in a blue suit.

The only character who is still herself is Mammy, who keeps walking in on whiny, self-referential goings-on and stomping right back out again, saying, "Hunh! Ain't fittin'!"

Finally Scarlett has had enough. She summons all her resources, gets down on the floor of her burnt-out study, digs into drifts of blighted, barren manuscript, and utters a vow: "As God is my witness, I am going to take hold of this poor, sorry, mealymouth material here and turn it into a novel of *real epic sweep*, like in the old days!"

And she does.

I just don't know how. □

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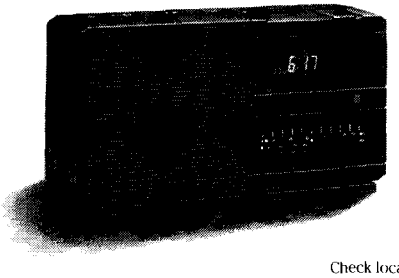

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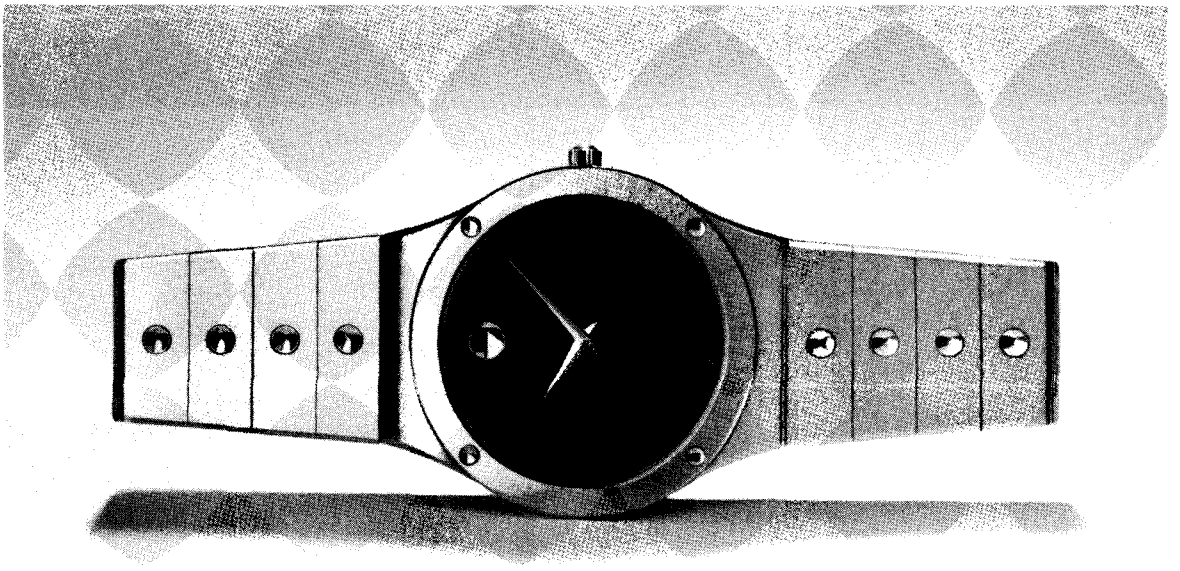

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An introduction to family systems theory, which, unlike psychoanalysis, sees human beings—young or old, married or single—as elements in a structure of interlocking relationships rather than as autonomous psychological entities

CHRONIC ANXIETY AND DEFINING A SELF

BY MICHAEL E. KERR

EFFECTIVE THERAPY DEPENDS ON ASSESSMENT; IF THE assessment is too narrow in scope, the therapy will probably be ineffective. A physician can repeatedly prescribe a diuretic for a patient with leg edema but fail to recognize that the patient is experiencing chronic heart failure. As a consequence, the edema keeps recurring. A psychiatrist can hospitalize a schizophrenic patient but fail to recognize how the problematic relationship between the patient and his parents has contributed to the hospitalization. The patient may improve and be discharged but be rehospitalized a few months later. A family therapist may treat two parents and their schizophrenic son but not attach importance to the fact that the parents are emotionally cut off from their families of origin. The parents' cutoff from the past undermines their ability to stop focusing on their son's problems; once again, the therapy will be ineffective.

The treatment in each of these situations would have been more successful if the clinician's evaluation of the problems had been broader, had included more sets of variables. Many clinicians have long recognized the importance of assessing variables from many levels of observation, but this has been difficult to do in the absence of an integrative theory. Although a satisfactory integrative theory does not yet exist, an important step toward the development of one occurred within psychiatry during the 1950s and early 1960s. This step was the development of family systems theory, by Dr. Murray Bowen, a professor of psychiatry at Georgetown University Medical Center, in Washington, D.C. Family systems theory radically departed from previous theories of human emotional functioning, by conceptualizing the family as an emotional unit and the individual as part of that unit rather than as an autonomous psychological entity. Psychoanalytic theory, which had been developed through the study of individual patients, had been able to see the family only as a collection of relatively autonomous people, each motivated by his or her own particular psychological mechanisms and conflicts. Psychoanalytic theory did have the concept of object relations, which was sometimes invoked to account for what occurred in relationships, but this was not really a relationship concept. It was rooted in the psychology of the individual. Family systems theory did not ignore the psychology of the individual but placed it in a larger context. Traditional psychological concepts were seen to describe, rather than to account for, human functioning.

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Family systems theory is based on the assumption that the human being is a product of evolution and that human behavior is regulated by the same natural processes that regulate the behavior of all other living things. A corollary assumption is that clinical disorders are a product of that part of man which he has in common with the lower animals. The human being's elaborately developed cerebral cortex and complex psychology contribute to making him unique in some respects, but despite these specializations, systems theory assumes that *Homo sapiens* is far more like other life forms than different from them.

To begin to view the family as a natural system, one must take a psychological step back from the family, to avoid having one's perceptions engulfed by the myriad details of what various family members say and do. Murray Bowen was able to take this step back and to discover that an order and predictability in human family relationships indeed existed. Bowen was one of several pioneers in family research who began their work in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The contributions of the other researchers, though quite significant, are beyond the scope of this article.

BOWEN'S PROFESSIONAL INTEREST IN THE FAMILY BEgan when he was a psychiatrist at the Menninger Clinic, in Topeka, Kansas, in the late 1940s. There he treated a wide variety of clinical problems, including schizophrenia, alcoholism, and depression, in both outpatient and inpatient settings. Unlike many of his colleagues, Bowen had considerable contact with the families of his patients. The principles of psychoanalytic therapy discouraged contact between therapist and family members, in order to prevent contamination of the therapist-patient transference relationship. But Bowen became intrigued with the family relationships of his patients and began to study them. Since many of the schizophrenic patients were being treated as inpatients, they were readily available for research study. The families that had a schizophrenic member, therefore, became a primary focus of Bowen's family studies.

One observation about patient-and-family interactions which particularly intrigued Bowen was that when patients had contact with relatives, especially with their mothers, the emotional impact on both sides was tremendous. During the late 1940s and early 1950s a number of other investigators also observed this intense relationship between a schizophrenic and his mother, and they described it as "symbiotic" in nature. Most of these investigators attempted to explain the symbiosis on the basis of psychoanalytic theory—that is, on the basis of the unconscious conflicts and motivations of mother and patient. Bowen, however, having been influenced by years of extensive reading in the natural sciences, attempted to explain the symbiosis in a different way.

Bowen's reading, which had been concentrated heavily in biology and evolutionary theory, inclined him to think that symbiotic relationships were a fact of nature and that they had an important evolutionary function. Bowen thought that the mother-patient symbiosis observed in schizophrenia was based on an evolutionarily deep biological process as well as on a more obvious, psychological process. He argued that what was being observed in clinical situations was simply an exaggeration of a natural process; one need not invoke the concept of unconscious motivation to account for it. A mother's intimate involvement with her child during its early years was typical of mammals, and in most instances the young mammal gradually grew away from the mother to become an independent adult. In human schizophrenia, however, the mother-child involvement was much more intense than average and was prolonged well into adult life.

In 1954 Bowen left the Menninger Clinic and moved his professional activities to the National Institute of Mental Health. The project he initiated at NIMH ran for five years and involved having entire nuclear families with a schizophrenic member live in an inpatient research unit for periods ranging from a few months to more than a year. The project, which was unique in psychiatric research, was designed to permit more careful study of the interaction between the mother and the schizophrenic patient. But having whole families in the unit provided far more information than Bowen had initially expected. By being able to watch the whole family at once and for an extended period, Bowen and his research group were able to see aspects of family interactions never previously defined.

Two particularly important new observations were made during the first six months or so of the project. First,

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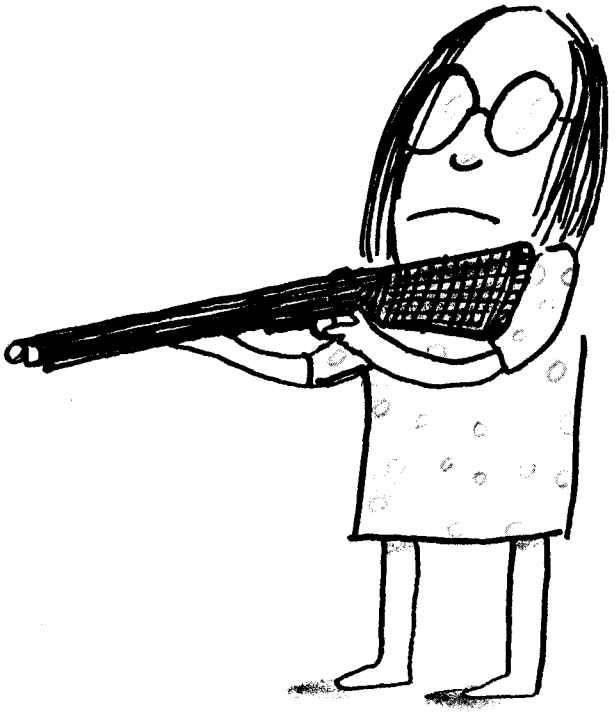

the emotional intensity of the relationship between the mothers and the schizophrenic patients was much stronger than previously supposed. The mother and her schizophrenic offspring were so involved with each other, so influenced by each other, that it was difficult to think of them as separate people. The second observation, perhaps even more important than the first, was that the intensity of this mother-patient process was not particularly different from the emotional intensity of relationships throughout the nuclear family. The process involved the entire family. The father and the patient's siblings, too, played a part in fostering and perpetuating the problem. Not only was it difficult, therefore, to think of mother and patient as separate people, but it was difficult to think of any family members that way.

A number of aspects of this emotional interdependence among family members led Bowen and his group to the conclusion that the family could be accurately conceptualized as an emotional unit. One frequently observed pattern was that family members functioned in reciprocal relationships with one another. A parent, for example, might feel and act "strong" in response to his or her schizophrenic child's acting "weak" or helpless. The schizophrenic child, in turn, would feel and act weak in response to the parent's acting strong. It was as if one person gained or borrowed strength as another person lost or gave it up. The functioning of one person, therefore, could not be adequately understood out of the context of the functioning of the people closely involved with him.

A way in which this reciprocal process was frequently played out was that one family member would become anxious about what he or she perceived as a problem or potential problem in another family member. As this "anxious one" became preoccupied (in fantasies, verbalizations, and so forth) with the appearance and behavior of the person perceived to have a problem, the "problem one" would typically exaggerate the very demeanor, attitude, or appearance that the anxious one was worried about. This exaggeration of the problem would, of course, increase the anxiety of the anxious one. An escalating cycle of anxiety and problem behavior would result in the anxious one's becoming more of a caretaker and the problem one's becoming more of a patient or child.

Each person became an emotional prisoner of the other, and neither was able to change his or her behavior enough to stop the process. Through these interactions the behavior of the family could create as many problems for the patient as the behavior of the patient created for the family. Family members, however, usually viewed their anxiety as being caused by the patient's attitudes and behavior and rarely viewed the patient's behavior as a reflection of their own anxious behavior. The patient, in turn, tended to perceive himself as an inadequate or defective person and as indeed the cause of the family problems.

A number of other reciprocal relationships were observed in the clinical families. Examples include overadequate and inadequate (one did everything right and could cope, and the other did everything wrong and could not cope), decisive and indecisive (one made all the decisions and the other felt incapable of making any decisions), dominant and submissive (one led and the other followed), hysterical and obsessive (one was a fountain of feelings and the other was inexpressive). The degree of polarization that these reciprocal traits reached was influenced by the degree to which family members defined the differences between them as a problem and anxiously focused on "correcting" those differences. In the process of this focusing, each family member would be driven to become a certain way in relationship to another family member which was different from the way he or she was with people outside the family.

This reciprocal functioning could be so precise that whenever a significant personality characteristic was found in one family member, its mirror-opposite characteristic would, predictably, be found in another family member. The two opposite characteristics would so strongly reinforce each other that the intensity of a particular trait in one person could not be understood apart from the intensity of the opposite trait in the other person.

When the NIMH project ended, in 1959, Bowen moved to the department of psychiatry at Georgetown University Medical Center. At Georgetown his research was conducted entirely in an outpatient setting and included a much higher proportion of families with problems less severe than schizophrenia. This broadening of the research to include neurotic as well as psychotic problems provided yet another vantage point from which to study families. What

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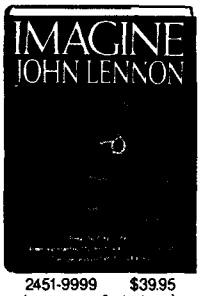

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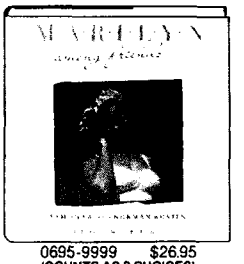

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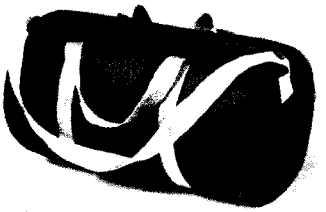

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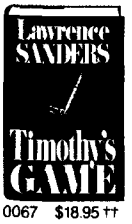

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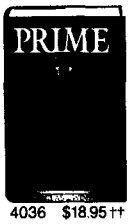

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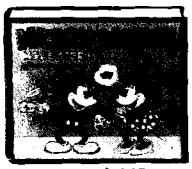

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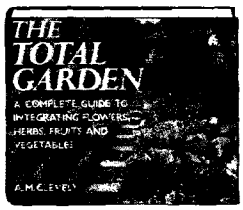

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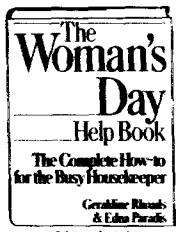

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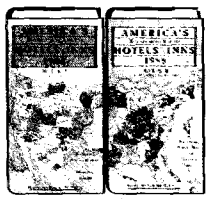

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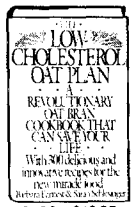

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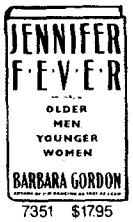

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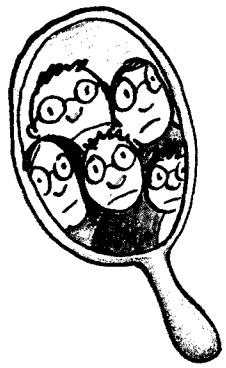

What became apparent was that the relationship processes that had been observed in families with a schizophrenic member were present in *all* families.

became apparent was that the relationship processes that had been observed in families with a schizophrenic member were present in *all* families; they were simply exaggerated in the families with a schizophrenic member. Families that had serious clinical problems were quantitatively but not qualitatively different from families that had less serious problems. Bowen has often said that "there is a little schizophrenia in all of us." The schizophrenic person is an exaggeration of what we all are. The psychotic thought processes of a schizophrenic person, which are easily labeled "crazy," are only one aspect of his emotional functioning.

Schizophrenia is present in all of us, and we all function in ways that contribute to the development of schizophrenia in others. We continually make decisions and do things that tend to impair as well as promote the functioning of others. We all belong to groups that function in ways that make participation difficult for certain group members. This process is most obvious in the family, but it can occur in any group. When the process reaches a certain level of emotional intensity (sufficient autonomy has been lost), the stage is set for the emergence of clinical schizophrenia or some other serious problem. Thought of in this way, schizophrenia is not caused by a biological defect (although biological defects may play a role in some manifestations of schizophrenia) or something that has "suddenly" gone wrong. It is, rather, an *outcome*—the outcome of a biologically rooted process that has many participants and that has taken shape over a long period of time. A family does not change from functioning very well to functioning very poorly in one generation.

OF ALL THE THEORIES THAT HAVE ATTEMPTED TO explain human behavior, on an organic, psychological, or magical basis, probably the most influential one, at least on Western civilization, has been Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory.

The atmosphere of the late nineteenth century, when Freud emerged with his extraordinary theory, emphasized organic rather than magical explanations of human behavior. Mental illness was generally considered to be the product of a structural defect in the patient's brain. Freud's assumption that human beings were motivated by unconscious conflicts, conflicts that were a function of childhood experiences, was a bold leap toward a coherent psychological explanation of human behavior. He proposed that disturbances in brain function rather than in brain structure were the basis of most neurotic and psychotic symptoms. He also described the analyst-patient relationship in great detail, showing that many aspects of that relationship reflected a transfer of characteristics from the patient's early relationship with his parents (transference) and a transfer of characteristics from the analyst's early relationship with his parents (countertransference). The understanding of transference and countertransference provided the basis for psychoanalytic therapy. Freud's concepts have proved to be an enormously valuable contribution to the understanding of human behavior and to the treatment of emotional problems.

Family systems theory differs from Freud's theory in two ways. As already noted, first, psychoanalytic theory has to do with the individual, whereas family systems theory pertains to the relationship system. Second, many psychoanalytic concepts seem to have been developed from ways of thinking that emphasize man's uniqueness as a form of life, whereas family systems concepts were developed on the assumption that much of human behavior, competent as well as dysfunctional, is a product of that part of man which he has in common with lower animals.

On the one hand, psychoanalytic ideas regard man as part of all life; on the other hand, the emphasis (in explaining mental illness) seems to be on a conflict between that which makes man unique, his conscious mind, and that which is said to make him an animal, his instinctual urges. This way of thinking is useful in explaining certain aspects of emotional symptoms (psychological mechanisms that may be unique to human beings determine whether a problem is acted out or internalized). However, it emphasizes the role of more recently developed (in the evolutionary sense) psychological mechanisms in mental illness. If the essence of mental disturbance in man is the inability to face his untamed impulses, as one summary of psychoanalytic ideas has it, what is the essence of mental disturbance in the chimpanzee, the gorilla, the whale? Is it the repression of unacceptable impulses by the chimpanzee which leads to neurotic symptoms? A model of human behavior that emphasizes man's uniqueness might ultimately prove to provide the best understanding of man, but Bowen did not think it would. His theory recognized those features that make man unique, but that uniqueness was not the cornerstone of the theory.

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Differentiation

EVERY HUMAN BEING ENTERS THE WORLD TOTALLY dependent on others for his well-being. In most instances the dependence is on the infant's mother. The infant begins life in a state of complete emotional fusion, or symbiosis, with the mother. As the years pass, the developing child has the task of becoming an individual in his own right, and the parents have the task of functioning in ways that permit that individuality to emerge.

Family systems theory assumes the existence of an instinctually rooted life force—*differentiation*, or individuality—in every human being which propels the developing child to grow to be an emotionally separate person, with the ability to think, feel, and act for himself. Also assumed is the existence of an instinctually rooted life force—togetherness—that keeps the members of a family emotionally connected and operating in reaction to one another. The result of these counterbalancing life forces is that no one achieves complete emotional separation from his family; the early attachment is never fully resolved.

People differ considerably in the degree of emotional separation they achieve from their families of origin. These differences are linked to two variables: the degree to which the person's parents achieved emotional separation from their families of origin, and the characteristics of a person's relationship with his parents, siblings, and other important relatives. Parents tend to function in ways that result in their children's achieving about the same degree of emotional separation from them that they achieved from their parents. However, not all children of one set of parents separate emotionally to the same degree. The parents' relationship with one child may foster more separation than their relationship with another. So one child may achieve a little more emotional separation from his parents than the parents achieved from their parents, and another child may achieve a little less.

The degree of emotional separation between a developing child and his family influences the child's ability to differentiate himself from the family. A child developing in the "emotional field" of a family becomes entangled in the family relationship process. From infancy onward he is exposed to many things, including the emotionality and subjectivity of those around him. In a well-differentiated family, emotionality and subjectivity are not strong influences on the relationship between the parents or on the relationships between the parents and the children. The low intensity of emotionality, or pressure for togetherness, permits a child to grow to think, feel, and act for himself. He can view his parents, his siblings, and others not just as people with roles in his life but as distinct and separate individuals. His self-image is not formed in reaction to the anxieties and emotional neediness of others; nor do others define the child through their own emotionally distorted perceptions. The child's self is not incorporated automatically from others through emotional pressure they apply to make him seek acceptance and approval. In contrast, beliefs, values, and convictions are arrived at thoughtfully and are consistent with one another. The child grows to be part of the family, yet an individual within it.

In a poorly differentiated family, emotionality and subjectivity have a strong influence on family relationships. The high intensity of emotionality, or pressure for togetherness, prevents a child from growing to think, feel, and act for himself. The child functions in reaction to others. A good example is a rebellious adolescent. His rebellion reflects the lack of differentiation that exists between him and his parents. The rebel is a highly reactive person whose self is poorly developed. He operates in opposition to his parents and others; they, in turn, are sufficiently unsure of themselves that they react automatically in opposition to his behavior. Most of his values and beliefs are formed in opposition to the beliefs of others. Based more on emotional reaction than on thinking, the beliefs are usually inconsistent. The parents' emotional immaturities influence their relationship with this child more strongly than they influence their relationship with his siblings. The child, in turn, responds in a more immature manner to the parents than do the siblings. This reinforcing system of interaction transcends blame, although mutual blaming is common. When the child leaves home, he replicates some version of the family relationship patterns with others. He plays his part in fostering the replication, and the others play theirs. Having achieved little emotional separation from his family, he achieves little in other relationships.

THE VARIABLE DEGREE OF EMOTIONAL SEPARATION that people achieve from their families of origin accounts for a variation in their levels of differentiation of self. To describe this variation among people Bowen developed a scale of differentiation. Complete differentiation exists in a person who has fully resolved the emotional attachment to his family. He has attained complete emotional maturity, in the sense that his self is developed sufficiently that, whenever it is important to him, he can be an individual in the group. He is responsible for himself, and neither fosters nor participates in the irresponsibility of others. This level of functioning is assigned a scale value of 100. Complete undifferentiation exists in a person who has achieved no emotional separation from his family. He is a "no-self," incapable of being an individual in the group. This level of functioning is assigned a scale value of 0.

The scale is primarily of theoretical importance. It was not designed for the purpose of assigning people to an exact level. The level to which a person might be assigned is necessarily imprecise, because the evaluation of one person requires a great deal of information about many people. Further, the scale does not define clinical diagnostic categories or what is normal or abnormal. It does, though, serve as a rough measure of a person's ability to adapt under stress. People at any level on the scale, if stressed suffi-

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ciently, can develop physical, emotional, or social symptoms. The higher the level of differentiation, however, the more stress required to trigger symptoms.

The characteristic that best describes the difference between people at various levels on the scale is the degree to which they are able to distinguish between the feeling process and the intellectual process. Associated with the capacity to distinguish between feelings and thoughts is the ability to choose between being guided by feelings and being guided by thoughts. The more entangled and intense the emotional atmosphere a person grows up in, the more his life is governed by his own and other people's feelings. People who have achieved the least degree of emotional separation from their families (the most entangled child in a poorly differentiated family) have the least ability to differentiate thinking from feeling. People who have achieved the most emotional separation from their families (the least entangled child in a well-differentiated family) have the most ability to differentiate thinking from feeling. Increasing one's ability to distinguish thinking from feeling, in oneself and others, and learning to use that ability to direct one's life and solve problems is the central guiding principle of family psychotherapy.

One of the difficulties in assigning a person a specific level on the scale arises out of a difference between *basic* and *functional* levels of differentiation. Basic differentiation is not dependent on the relationship process, whereas functional differentiation is. People with widely different basic levels can, under some circumstances, have similar functional levels, and the level at which a person is operating at present is not necessarily his basic level. "Scale level" generally refers to the basic level, and since basic level can be masked by functional level, a basic scale level is often difficult to determine.

The basic level of differentiation is largely determined by the degree of emotional separation a person achieves from his family of origin, the degree of separation being linked to the multigenerational emotional process in the family. Basic level is fairly well established by the time a child reaches adolescence and usually remains fixed for life, although unusual life experiences or a structured effort to increase basic level later in life can lead to some change in it. Clinical experience suggests that a person must be self-sustaining and living independent of his family of origin to be successful at modifying his basic level of differentiation in relationship to his family.

People can function at levels that are higher or lower than their basic level, depending on the relationship system in which they are operating. For example, two people with basic levels of 35 who marry might during the course of the marriage do enough "borrowing" and "trading" of selves that one spouse's functional level rises to an average of 55 and the other's drops to an average of 15. This borrowing and trading process is one way people adapt to one another to relieve anxiety.

Functional level is influenced by the level of chronic anxiety in a person's most important relationship systems. When the level of anxiety is low, people are less reactive and more thoughtful. This tends to stabilize individual functioning and to minimize the pressure people put on one another, which can impair someone's functioning. When the level of anxiety is high, people become more reactive and less thoughtful; system functioning is prone to decline.

Functional level can be enhanced or harmed by relationships, drugs, beliefs, cultural values, religious dogma, and even superstitions. It can rise and fall quickly or be stable over long periods, depending largely on the status of central relationships. After a divorce the functioning of one former spouse may rise and that of the other decline. This is a change in functional level, not in basic level. The functional level of a person with a low basic level can rise and fall many times during just a few hours. Functional level may be higher at work than it is at home. A person's functional level may either increase or decrease after the birth of a child. It may drop for a long period following the death of a parent.

Bowen has divided the scale of differentiation into four ranges (0–25, 25–50, 50–75, 75–100) and has defined some of the characteristics of people in each range.

People at the lower end of the scale—0 to 25—live in a feeling world, although in the lower part of this range people are so highly sensitized to the world around them that they have lost the capacity to feel; they are numb. Emotionally needy and highly reactive to others, people in this range have great difficulty maintaining long-term relationships. Most of their life energy goes into "loving" or "being loved," and much energy is consumed in reactions to having failed to get love. Little energy is left for self-directed goals. Trying to achieve comfort is enough. Such people have a high level of chronic anxiety, and finding situations in which they can be truly comfortable is therefore difficult.

People at this level are so responsive to others' opinions and to what others want them to do that their functioning is almost totally governed by their emotional reactions to the environment. Their responses can range from automatic compliance to extreme oppositional behavior. At the very bottom of the scale are people who have given up on relationships. Typically they are in institutions or are existing marginally in society. Hard-core schizophrenic people are in the 0–10 range of differentiation. Chronically schizophrenic people who lead somewhat productive lives are a little higher on the scale. Skid Row alcoholics and incorrigible drug addicts usually have basic levels below 25. A favorable relationship system may have permitted these people to function successfully up to a point in life, but when the system was disrupted, perhaps through death or divorce, they collapsed into permanent impairment. Apart from a dysfunctional person's connecting with a supportive relationship system, the most effective therapy for such a person is usually with other people who are in relationship to him, such as parents, or adult siblings who are functioning on a somewhat higher level and who are motivated to

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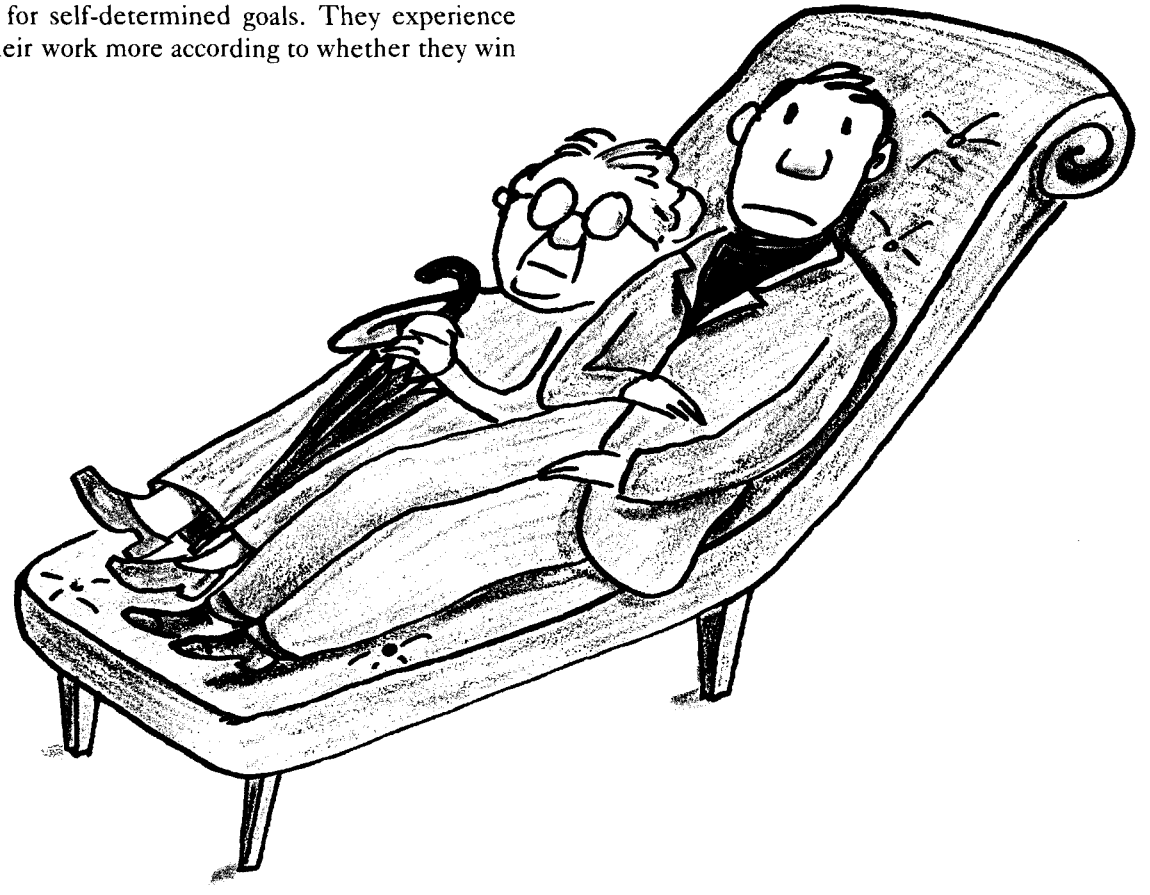
work on themselves in relationship to the dysfunctional person. If the parents, siblings, or others can stay in contact with the dysfunctional person and maintain their own functioning—for example, by not assuming excessive responsibility for the dysfunctional one—the dysfunctional person will often improve.

People in the 25–50 range have poorly defined selves but a budding capacity to differentiate. Those in the lower part of this range have many of the characteristics of people lower on the scale. Lacking beliefs and convictions of their own, they adapt quickly to the prevailing ideology. Highly suggestible and quick to imitate others to gain acceptance, they are ideological chameleons. They adopt the viewpoints that best complement their emotional makeup and look outside themselves, to cultural values, religion, philosophy, the law, rule books, science, physicians, and other sources, for support for their positions.

People in the 35–40 range are sufficiently adaptive that they generally do not manifest the impairment and paralysis characteristic of the majority of people lower on the scale. They remain, however, highly influenced by feelings. They are sensitized to emotional disharmony, to the opinions of others, and to creating a good impression. They are apt students of facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, and actions that may mean approval or disapproval. Their feelings can soar with praise or approval and be dashed with criticism or disapproval. Like people lower on the scale, they direct so much life energy toward "loving" and seeking "love" and approval that they have little energy available for self-determined goals. They experience success in their work more according to whether they win approval from superiors and whether they develop a satisfying relationship system than according to the inherent value of the work. They are for the most part in lifelong pursuit of the ideal close relationship.

People in the 35–40 range have low levels of *solid self*, an important component of basic differentiation, but reasonable levels of *pseudo-self*, an important component of functional differentiation. *Pseudo-self* refers to knowledge and beliefs acquired from others which are incorporated by the intellect and negotiable in relationships with others. Pseudo-self is created by emotional pressure and can be modified by emotional pressure. The principles and beliefs of pseudo-self are quickly changed to enhance one's image with others or to oppose others. Although these opinions and beliefs are incorporated by the intellect, they are strongly fused with the feeling process. This fusion is evident when opinions and beliefs are expressed with the authoritativeness of a know-it-all, the compliance of a disciple, or the opposition of a rebel. Conviction is so fused with feeling that it becomes a cause. When composed of beliefs and opinions that are comforting or provide direction, pseudo-self can reduce anxiety and enhance emotional and physical functioning. This can be so even if the beliefs conflict with facts.

Pseudo-self is pretend self. People pretend to be more or less important than they really are, stronger or weaker than they really are, more or less attractive than they really



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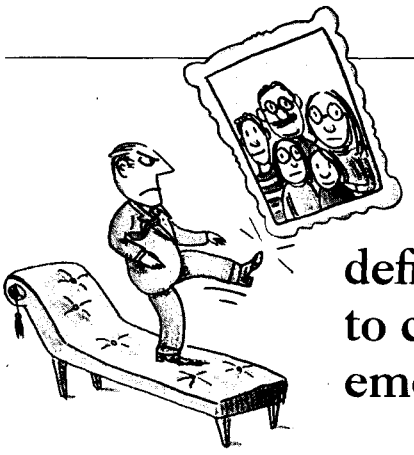

Many supposed attempts at self-definition are really attempts to get others to change or to pry oneself loose from emotionally intense situations.

are. Pseudo-self can also be thought of as a pretend intellect, in the sense that pressure for conformity can cause intellectual principle to be compromised. Feelings lead the person to change his intellectual position rather than risk displeasure by standing firm.

In contrast to pseudo-self, solid self is made up of firmly held convictions and beliefs that are formed slowly and can be changed only from within the self. Coercion and persuasion from others cannot change them. A person who has the courage to stand firm, without insisting that he is "right" and others are "wrong," can have an amazingly constructive effect on an anxious group or family.

People in the upper part of the 25–50 range have higher levels of solid self and many of the characteristics of people higher on the scale of differentiation. In contrast to those in the 25–35 range, who under stress will experience transient psychotic episodes, delinquency problems, and other, similarly intense symptoms, people in the 40–50 range when under stress tend to develop neurotic symptoms. The level of impairment tends to be lower, and recovery after the stress is alleviated tends to be complete.

In people who are above 50 on the scale, the intellectual system is sufficiently developed to make a few decisions of its own. The intellect recognizes that discipline is often needed to overrule the emotional system. At these levels people have fairly well defined opinions and beliefs on most essential issues. In the lower part of the 50–75 range, however, people are still so responsive to the relationship system that they hesitate to say what they believe. While they know there is a better way to live, they still tend to follow a life course like that of people who are below 50 on the scale.

People scoring above 60 are freer to have a choice between being governed by intellect and governed by feelings. They have less chronic anxiety, are less emotionally reactive, and have more solid self than people lower on the scale. With their individuality better developed, they have more freedom to move back and forth between seeking emotional closeness and pursuing independent goals. They derive pleasure and satisfaction from either, and are free to participate in highly emotional situations, knowing they can extricate themselves with logical reasoning when the need arises. They may experience periods of laxness in which they permit the automatic pilot of the emotional system to take full control, but when trouble develops, they can take over, calm the anxiety, and avoid a life crisis.

Under sufficient stress people in the 50–75 range can develop fairly severe physical, emotional, and social symptoms, but these symptoms tend to be episodic and the recovery relatively fast. A transient psychotic episode is still possible, but an unusual degree of stress is required.

Not many people appear to function in the 75–100 range of differentiation of self. Bowen has left the 95–100 range as hypothetical or theoretical, believing that no one is likely to have all the characteristics of 100 on the scale. Those rare people in the 85–95 range would have most of the characteristics.

A person who functions in the 85–95 range is principle-oriented and goal-directed. He begins growing away from his parents in infancy and becomes an "inner-directed" adult. While always sure of his beliefs and convictions, he is not dogmatic or fixed in his thinking. Capable of hearing and evaluating the viewpoints of others, he can discard old beliefs in favor of new ones. He can listen without reacting and can communicate without antagonizing others. He is secure within himself, and his functioning is not affected by praise or criticism. He can respect the identity of another without becoming critical or emotionally involved in trying to modify that person's life course. Able to assume total responsibility for himself and sure of his responsibility to others, he does not become overly responsible for others. He is realistically aware of his dependence on his fellow man and is free to enjoy relationships. He does not have a "need" for others that can impair functioning, and others do not feel used by him. Tolerant and respectful of differences, he is not prone to engage in polarized debates. He is realistic in his assessment of himself and others and not preoccupied with his place in the hierarchy. His expectations of himself and others are also realistic. He tolerates intense feelings well, and so he does not act automatically to alleviate them. His level of chronic anxiety is very low, and he can adapt under most stresses without developing symptoms.

Defining a Self

A GREAT DEAL HAS BEEN LEARNED ABOUT THE CONcept of differentiation by observing the obstacles that people encounter in trying to raise their basic level in the course of family psychotherapy. A person with the ability and the motivation can, through a gradual process of learning that is converted into action, become more

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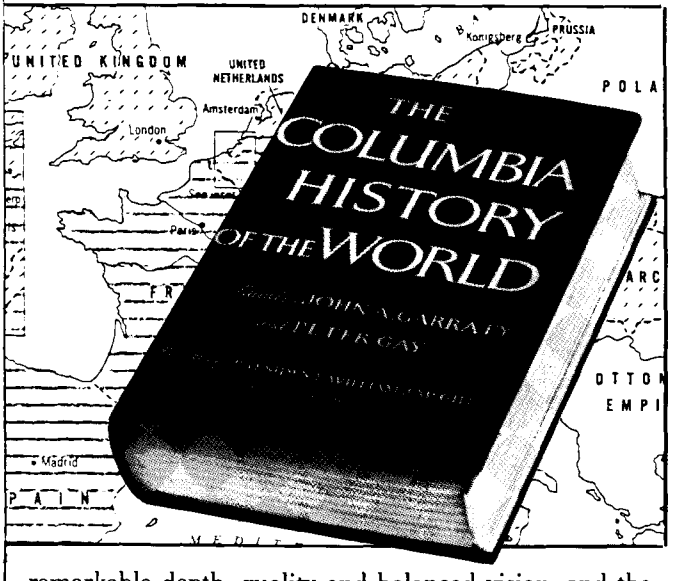

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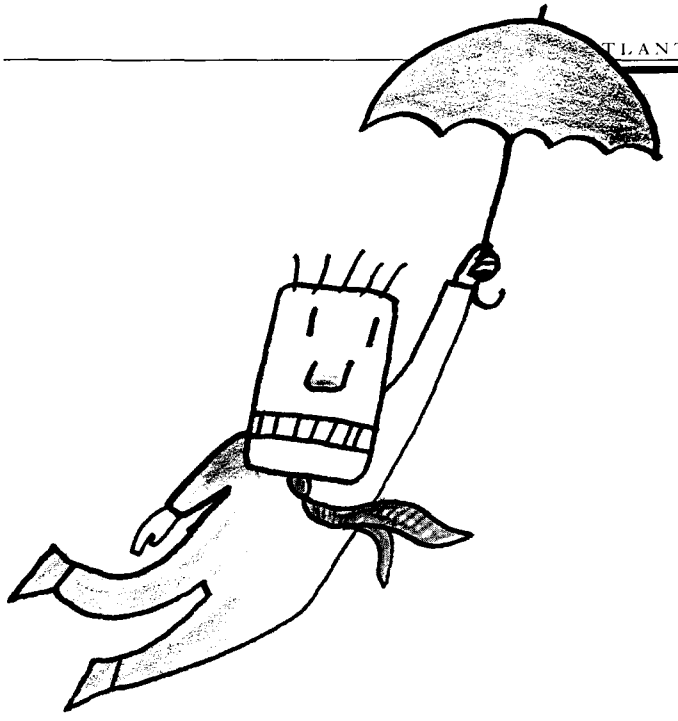
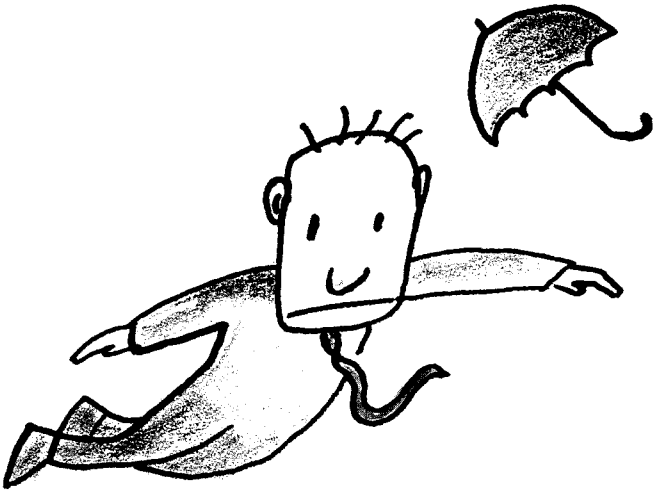


of a self in his family and other relationship systems. This process of change has been called *defining a self*. A change in basic level can be achieved while in relationship to emotionally significant others, but not when others are avoided or when one's actions disrupt a relationship.

Most people want to be individuals, but not everyone is willing to give up togetherness to achieve more individuality. People frequently are willing to be individuals only to the extent that the relationship system approves and permits it. Giving up some togetherness does not mean giving up emotional closeness. It means that one becomes less dependent on the support and acceptance of others. Some degree of rejection predictably occurs when a person embarks on a path that his spouse, parents, colleagues, or others do not approve of. The rejection, which is triggered by the threat to the relationship balance, is designed to restore the balance. When a person attempts to be more of a self in a relationship system, the absolutely predictable response from important others is "You are wrong; change back; if you don't, these are the consequences!" In fact, if such responses do not occur, one's efforts to define more of a self are probably inconsequential. To navigate through the emotional quagmire requires a well-thought-out direction and a tolerance for intense feelings that might incline one to give up the effort and restore relationship harmony.

A difficult question to resolve when attempting to be more of a self is whether one's effort is based mostly on emotional reactivity to others (undifferentiation) or mostly on a thoughtfully determined direction for oneself (differentiation). Everybody proclaims the importance of being a self, but much of what is done under that rubric is selfish and fails to respect others. Many supposed attempts at self-definition are really attempts to get others to change or to pry oneself loose from emotionally intense situations. Some pronouncements, along the lines of "I am not going to get into your problem," are mostly efforts to avoid responsibility. The person who makes such a statement is probably so vulnerable to getting emotionally overinvolved that he must invoke a rule to control himself. An effort to increase one's level of differentiation does not require others to change and is not contingent on anyone's cooperation. More important, it is not fueled by anger. Anger can sometimes be a stimulus to clarify one's thinking, but it is not a reliable guide for action. When someone angrily and dogmatically claims to be a self, he is usually unsure of his position and is blaming others for his plight.

Differentiation is a product of a way of thinking that translates into a way of being. It is not a therapeutic technique. Techniques are born of efforts to change others. Trying to achieve a higher level of differentiation and more solid self means increasing one's capacity for emotional detachment or neutrality. Increasing one's capacity for detachment or neutrality depends on changes in one's thinking. Such changes are reflected in the ability to be in emotional contact with a difficult, emotionally charged



problem and not feel compelled to preach about what others "should" do, not rush in to fix the problem, and not pretend to be detached by emotionally insulating oneself. Improving one's ability to contain these emotionally driven urges requires developing a way of thinking that can counterbalance them. One must have enough confidence in an alternative way of thinking and being that one's feeling responses do not automatically dictate one's actions.

The process of trying to be more differentiated requires more awareness of the influence of anxiety and emotional reactivity on one's actions and inactions, and it requires some re-examination of one's basic assumptions about behavior and the origin of human problems. A common assumption about people with emotional problems, for example, is that they did not receive enough "love" and support from their families. Many people have an attitude that if only they could get more "love" and attention, they would feel and function better. The concept of differentiation places this assumption in a broader context—name-

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ly, that the neediest people have achieved the least emotional separation from their families of origin. The broader context can provide a guiding principle for an approach to human problems that runs counter to the feeling and subjective process. An approach based on the feeling process is one that says people who feel unloved need more love. In contrast, an approach based on a systems principle is one that says people who feel unloved are addicted to love. An intense and nonthreatening relationship may relieve the person's symptoms, but it will do so by replicating what once existed in the early parent-child relationship (in reality or fantasy), not by meeting a need that was never before met.

Chronic Anxiety

DIFFERENTIATION OF SELF IS ONE OF TWO MAIN variables defined by family systems theory to explain level of functioning; the other is chronic anxiety. The lower a person's level of differentiation, the less his adaptiveness under stress. The higher the level of chronic anxiety in a relationship system, the greater the strain on people's adaptive capabilities. A person's adaptiveness has been exceeded when the intensity of his anxious response to stress impairs his own functioning or the functioning of those with whom he is emotionally connected. The functional impairment can range from mild to serious physical, emotional, or social symptoms. Whether or not symptoms develop, therefore, depends both on the amount of stress and on the adaptiveness of the individual or family under stress.

A distinction needs to be drawn between *acute* and *chronic* anxiety. Acute anxiety generally occurs in response to a real threat and is experienced as being of limited duration. People usually adapt to acute anxiety fairly successfully. Chronic anxiety generally occurs in response to imagined threats and is experienced as having no end in sight. Chronic anxiety often strains or exceeds people's ability to adapt. Acute anxiety is fed by fear of what is; chronic anxiety is fed by fear of what might be. While there are inborn and learned elements in both acutely and chronically anxious responses, learning plays a more important role in chronic anxiety. While everyone experiences acute and chronic anxiety, the difference between people in the amount of chronic anxiety they experience seems to be based primarily on learned responses.

Chronic anxiety, which is assumed to have manifestations on levels ranging from intracellular systems to societal processes, is influenced by many things, but it is not *caused* by any one thing. It is most accurately conceptualized as a system or process of actions and reactions that, once triggered, quickly provides its own momentum and becomes largely independent of the initial triggering stimuli. Whereas specific events or issues are usually the principal generators of acute anxiety, the principal generators of chronic anxiety are people's reactions to a disturbance in the balance of a relationship system. Real or anticipated events, such as retirement or a child's leaving home, may initially disturb or threaten the balance of a family system, but once the balance is disturbed, chronic anxiety is propagated more by people's reactions to the disturbance than by reactions to the event itself. A child's leaving home, for example, may result in changes in the parents' relationship. The child may have functioned as a buffer for parental conflicts. After he leaves, the equilibrium in the parents' relationship is disturbed and their dissatisfactions and frustrations with each other intensify. The increased reactivity of the parents to each other usually generates more anxiety than their reactions to the absence of the child.

It follows that when people can maintain comfortable contact with emotionally significant others, they are more likely to adapt successfully to events that are potentially stressful. An example of this is what may occur during a pregnancy. The relationship of the couple may be in harmony and contributing to the emotional well-being of both people until the wife gets pregnant. The anticipated birth can sufficiently disturb the emotional equilibrium in the marriage that one of the two parents-to-be gets into an unfavorable position emotionally. The woman may feel overloaded by the anticipated responsibility for the infant and want to lean on her husband for more emotional support. The husband may react to his wife's neediness by becoming critical of her and pulling away. His distancing isolates the wife, which further increases her anxiety and yearning for support. Her level of anxiety may remain high for many months, until the family system establishes a new equilibrium that includes the child. Had the husband and wife not been so reactive to each other, they could have adapted to the pregnancy more successfully.

In a poorly differentiated system, after system equilibrium has been disturbed, to restore that equilibrium may not be possible without the introduction of a chronic symptom. For example, the mother in this case could develop chronic alcohol problems following the birth of the

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An individual can stabilize his emotional functioning around a chronic physical problem, and a family can stabilize its functioning around a chronically ill person.

baby. The reactivity of the parents to each other precludes reduction of anxiety through support provided by the marital relationship. In lieu of such support, drinking can provide some relief from anxiety. If the husband and wife both assume that the problem is her drinking and not their relationship, this takes pressure off the marriage and allows equilibrium to be restored. It may be "easier" (it may provide an illusion of marital harmony that is attractive to both people) for each spouse to define the problem as drinking rather than the relationship. In actuality the wife's drinking is strongly influenced by the way both spouses function and not, as is often assumed, evidence that her character is more defective than her husband's.

The level of chronic anxiety varies among individuals and within an individual over time; it also varies among families and within a family over time. The average level of chronic anxiety in a person and in a nuclear family parallels the basic level of differentiation of that individual and family. The lower the basic level of differentiation, the higher the average level of chronic anxiety. This component of a person's chronic anxiety level has little to do with his extant life situation; it is learned during the developmental years and carried through life.

The average level of chronic anxiety developed by children growing up in the same nuclear family is not equal. This is because not all the children from one set of parents separate emotionally from the parents to the same extent. The child who is the most caught up in the family's emotional problems separates the least, is the most relationship-dependent of the siblings, and "inherits" the most chronic anxiety. The child who is the least involved in the family's problems separates the most, is the least relationship-dependent of the siblings, and inherits the least anxiety.

The Binding of Anxiety

AN INDIVIDUAL MANIFESTS ANXIETY IN SEVERAL WAYS, depending on the specific way that anxiety has been "bound," or integrated into that person's life structures. The binding of anxiety in one part of a system reduces it in the system as a whole. Relationships are by far the most effective anxiety-binders. Even a "lost soul" can derive significant emotional well-being from the "right" relationship; the problem is maintaining the relationship. People who deny their need for attachment to others can be just as relationship-dependent as those who constantly seek a relationship. Loners can bind just as much anxiety by avoiding people as people who constantly seek social contact can bind through that contact. Poorly differentiated people who are loners usually are labeled "schizoid." Poorly differentiated people who are consistently involved in tumultuous relationships usually are labeled "hysterical." Schizoid people and hysterical people are dealing with the same basic problem: a high degree of emotional need for and reactivity to others. The lower the level of differentiation, the more intense the process.

Drugs are another major binder of anxiety. Alcohol, tranquilizers, and illegal drugs can bind anxiety for an individual and for a family. The more the family can focus on alcohol as the problem, the more other potential problems can be overlooked. Excessive alcohol use, of course, can also threaten a family and be a source of anxiety. Overeating to the point of extreme obesity, or bulimia, and undereating to the point of anorexia are other manifestations and binders of anxiety. So are overachievement and underachievement. Overachievers are approval-oriented and bind anxiety with their successes. Underachievers are also relationship-oriented, but they bind anxiety by promoting the involvement of others in their failures and by thwarting others' efforts to change them. Preoccupation with physical health and physical symptoms can be another anxiety-binder. An individual can stabilize his emotional functioning around a chronic physical problem, and a family can stabilize its functioning around a chronically ill person. Homosexual fantasies can be a manifestation of anxiety—the higher the level of anxiety, the more intense the fantasies—and the acting-out of homosexual impulses can bind anxiety as well as be a source of it. Gambling, hoarding, and overspending money can also be anxiety-binders.

Personality traits such as obsessiveness and hysteria, impulsiveness and indecisiveness, passivity and aggressiveness, shyness and obtrusiveness, procrastination, perfectionism, paranoia, grandiosity, optimism and pessimism, can also serve as anxiety binders. A moralist can bind as much anxiety by persuading others to live a moral life as an immoralist can bind by resisting others' attempts to reform him. Temperance can bind as much anxiety as indulgence. The idealization and romanticization of people, places, and activities can bind anxiety. Undervaluing the self can contribute to a person's sense of well-being, by reducing

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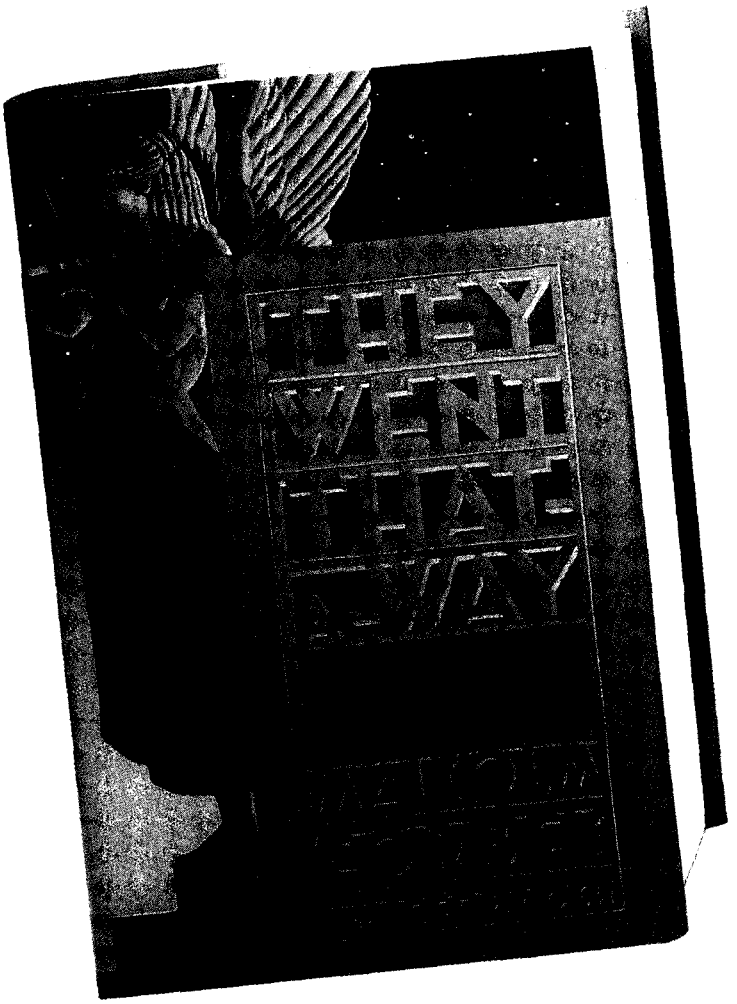

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the person's expectations of himself. Undervaluing others can also contribute to a sense of well-being, by fostering a feeling of superiority.

When people become more anxious, the pressure for togetherness increases. During high-anxiety periods human beings strive for oneness through efforts to think and act alike. It is ironic that this striving for sameness increases the likelihood that a group will become fragmented into factions. These are a product of the pressure for oneness and the intolerance of differences which is associated with it. Fragmentation and emotionally determined alliances reflect the loss of differentiation in a group.

As the level of anxiety increases, people experience a greater need for emotional contact and closeness and simultaneously, in reaction to similar pressure from others, a greater need for distance and emotional insulation. The more people's responses are based on anxiety, the less tolerant those people are of one another and the more they are irritated by differences. They are less able to permit one another to be what they are. Anxiety often increases feelings of being overloaded, overwhelmed, and isolated—feelings that are accompanied by the wish to have responsibility lifted.

When some people become anxious, they become more intent on getting others to do things their way. The more anxious they are, the surer they are that they know what is right or best. Frustration with others who resist their efforts often leads to disappointment and anger, sometimes even to giving up and withdrawing. The mirror image of the bossy person is a person who becomes more helpless when he gets anxious.

Efforts to get others to change can escalate to problematic levels through cycles in which each person in turn feels criticized, grows defensive, and counterattacks. The flames are fanned when each blames the other for the escalation. The process is automatic and, in a sense, mindless, the product of emotional reactivity and subjectivity. The process often begins when one person feels rejected or ignored (for real or imagined reasons) and wants more response from the other. The second person, responding to the perception of a certain tone in the other's voice, may feel the first has an insatiable need for attention and confrontation, and may "not want to get into it." This reluctance increases the unhappiness of the first person, who then pushes for a more acceptable response. The second person, generally oversensitive to disharmony and confrontation, may attempt to withdraw or at least show no surface reaction. This withdrawal or apparent lack of response angers or "hurts" the first person, whose next series of prodding statements can result in the second person's finally exploding. At that point both people are out of control. This is a wearing and energy-consuming interaction, but an out-of-control response is considered preferable to no response, to being "ignored" or "discounted."

When a family is stressed, either by an event that has an impact chiefly on one member (such as a work- or school-related problem) or by an event that affects several family members (such as an illness in a close relative), anxiety begins to rise. Up to a point one person in a family may be distressed without the others' becoming too uncomfortable or reactive. This is ideal. The low level of reactivity allows the person who is feeling upset and unsettled

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to communicate his feelings and thoughts freely, unencumbered by a fear of unduly upsetting others or by an apprehension that others will respond by sermonizing or withdrawing. Such circumstances provide maximum emotional support for people.

Many attitudes and reactions, all of which are related to undifferentiation, work against the perpetuation of the ideal situation. One attitude is that others should have an answer for one's distress and should alleviate it. Attempts to communicate about problems may be so colored by this sort of emotional neediness that the manner of communication stirs up considerable reactivity in others, who usually experience this sort of expectation as a burden. Another obstacle to realizing or maintaining the ideal is a concern about how others might respond so great that it is easier to hide the problem, even deny its existence to oneself, than to talk about it. Worry about how others will respond can range from perceiving them as too fragile to be burdened to fearing their criticism of one's inadequacies.

Other obstacles to comfortable communication about emotional issues stem from the reactivity of family members to the one who is distressed initially. This reactivity can be manifested in withdrawal, predictable lectures, guilt-induced efforts to placate the troubled one, frenzied attempts to alleviate distress, and acting out in response to the upset. For example, a wife becomes upset about her husband's reluctance to talk openly about his mother's recent diagnosis of cancer, and within days their youngest son, reacting to his parents' anxiety, is suspended for fighting in school. Efforts to get people to "open up" and maneuvers to escape from the pressure to do so are a frequent component of anxiety escalations in families. Much of what is done in the name of helping others—getting others to "express their feelings," for example—reflects the inability of the "helper" to tolerate his own anxiety.

Anxiety that begins in one person can eventually infect the whole family. Distress that begins in the mother about some event in her personal life may lead first to a reaction by her most undifferentiated child, perhaps her daughter. As the child becomes distressed, her behavior may be affected in a way that troubles the mother. The daughter's behavior may be interpreted by the mother as a sign of depression. This adds to the mother's anxiety, which may then shift from that which distressed her initially to the child's emerging problems. The father may maintain some emotional separation from his wife's anxiety for a time, but his apprehension about being criticized for not being sufficiently supportive, coupled with his concern that his wife feels overwhelmed, results in the quick evaporation of any separateness. Then he acts more according to his feelings (oversensitivity to anger and conflict with his wife and feeling responsibility for alleviating her distress) than according to what he thinks (perhaps that his wife's anxious focus on the child is intensifying the child's symptoms).

When the father gets anxious, he may direct his efforts toward trying to get the child to "be happy," even though he may think that the problem is not solely in the child but in his wife, too. The father's approach may relieve some family anxiety in the short run, by reassuring his wife that something is being done and that she is not alone with the problem, but it complicates the situation for both him and the family in the long run. His being a no-self in the situation—functioning in reaction to others' anxiety and subjectivity—allows his anxiety, his wife's, and their daughter's to direct the course of events. In time even the slightly better differentiated siblings will get caught up in the problem; when they do, no one will have much control. A sibling's reactivity may be manifested in criticizing his parents for catering excessively to his sister or criticizing his sister for "causing" their parents to be so upset. All this focus on others, which is fed by anxiety, emotional reactivity, and subjectivity, pushes the family into a less functional state, a regression. The regression deepens as anxiety feeds on anxiety. Anxiety converts feared or imagined problems into real ones (the daughter does become quite depressed), the appearance of which are then used to justify all the worry.

Although anxiety-driven regressions in families and other social groups can last from days to years to lifetimes, any relationship system will regress only so far. At some point the discomfort associated with habitually taking the easy way becomes greater than the discomfort anticipated if one tries to recover some semblance of individuality. At the emotional nadir someone might say, "We are getting nowhere here and I must do something about me. If I keep worrying about you, we will all go under." Even if that person takes a dogmatic and overly authoritarian stance, if the emphasis is on himself and not the other, it can break the anxiety spiral and stem the regression. If somebody runs away or dies, that can stop it too. Deaths and serious illness are possible complications of protracted regressions. Regressions can end without a leave-taking or a death, however, if one person can develop some direction not dictated by trying to relieve the anxiety of the moment. Sometimes just seeking help can reduce anxiety and, consequently, symptoms. As anxiety subsides, each person recovers some ability to act on thinking, the emotional boundaries between family members gradually return to baseline level, and symptoms diminish or disappear.

Reduction of anxiety is an important component of nearly all psychotherapeutic methods. The approach to anxiety based on the principles of family systems theory is indirect, in the sense that the reduction of chronic anxiety is a by-product of an increase in one's basic level of differentiation. If one family member, through a structured long-term effort, can increase his basic differentiation while in relationship to emotionally significant others, he will reduce not only his own level of chronic anxiety but also the level of chronic anxiety in all the relationship systems in which his functioning has a significant emotional impact on others.

Of course, anxiety can be reduced in many ways that do

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not depend on the development of more of a self. For example, physical distance from emotionally significant others or denial of one's responsiveness to them can provide emotional insulation from people and situations that are difficult. Projection of one's feelings and attitudes onto others can also relieve anxiety within oneself, by allowing one to view the other people as the problem. These are very common psychological mechanisms for dealing with anxiety. When people have difficulty dealing with family or other relationships, contacts are frequently kept brief and superficial to reduce the discomfort. When people deal with difficult emotional situations in this way, however, they are prone to become so emotionally invested in the success of new relationships that they easily lose perspective and re-create in the new relationships a version of the problems they thought they had escaped by running away. In addition, when people use distance or denial to manage anxiety, they may lower the level of it in themselves but raise the level in others. One may become more comfortable oneself but increase the level of anxiety in those to whom one is emotionally connected. Such an outcome is a mixed blessing.

A number of therapeutic techniques have been developed to reduce chronic anxiety, including biofeedback, transcendental meditation, yoga, jogging, and other "stress management" activities. These approaches are primarily designed not to increase the basic level of differentiation of self but to help people become more aware of the physiological manifestations of anxiety and to learn techniques of self-control and relaxation. These techniques can be useful adjuncts to working on improving one's level of differentiation. Sometimes, however, the effectiveness of these approaches appears to be based more on the relationship with the therapist or teacher (or with one's fellow learners) than on any new awareness of anxiety or greater ability at self-control. The therapist and the group become a support system. The problem with using a group in this way is that improvements in functioning may depend on maintaining the relationships.

Side effects may result from stress-management approaches that ignore family process. After a symptomatic family member makes a firm commitment to biofeedback, extensive jogging, or perhaps individual psychotherapy, and his functioning begins to improve, another family member may develop problems; the anxiety is unloaded from one person onto another. In these instances the relationship process that contributes to the development of symptoms is overlooked in the pursuit of symptom relief. One person achieves comfort at the expense of another.

This "exchange" of anxiety and undifferentiation between family members may sound almost mystical in nature. While exactly *how* this exchange occurs is unknown, it is assumed to depend on the transfer of information through the standard sensory modalities. People are keenly responsive (not necessarily consciously) or sensitive to one another's emotional states and make automatic adjustments in response to the information received. This process allows anxiety that begins in one person eventually to manifest itself in a physical, emotional, or social symptom in another person. The emergence of the symptom in the other can, in turn, reduce the anxiety of the first person as he begins to minister to the now symptomatic one. This alleviation of anxiety in the first person can also have a calming effect on the symptomatic one; it is often easier, on an emotional level, to be symptomatic than it is to tolerate one's internal reactions to another's distress. One allows oneself to be taken care of because it makes the caretaker feel better and, in some respects, easier to deal with.

Differentiation of self, however, can reduce anxiety and symptoms in one person without symptoms' resurfacing in another, except perhaps temporarily. When one family member can become more aware of his own part in whatever problems exist, become more willing to assume responsibility for that part, and become more able to act on that basis, improvements in his functioning will not be contingent on someone else's "absorbing" his share of the family's immaturity or undifferentiation. It is a change in functioning which does not lead to a seesaw effect.

Triangles

THE RELATIONSHIP SYSTEM IN FAMILIES AND OTHER groups consists of *interlocking triangles*. The triangle is the basic molecule of an emotional system. It is the smallest stable relationship unit.

The thinking on which the concept of a triangle is based illustrates the thinking on which all of family systems theory is based. This theory is an attempt to define the facts of functioning in human relationships—facts that can be observed over and over, so consistently that the patterns become knowable and predictable. What and how and when and where are facts about a relationship that can be observed. Conjecture about why something happens is not fact, and so the inclusion of such conjecture in the theoretical concepts was avoided as much as possible. Triangles have to do with the what, how, when, and where of relationships; they are simply a fact of nature. To observe them requires that one stand back and watch the process unfold. Conjecture about why a person says or does a particular thing immediately takes the observer out of a systems frame of reference. The assignment of motive is necessarily subjective and not verifiable; the assignment of function can be objective and potentially verifiable.

The triangle is a paradigm for describing the dynamic equilibrium of a three-person system. The major influence on the activity of a triangle is anxiety. When the level of anxiety is low, a relationship between two people can be calm and comfortable. However, since a relationship is easily disturbed by emotional forces within it and from outside, it usually does not remain completely comfortable very long. Inevitably some increase in the anxiety level disturbs the equilibrium of the relationship. A two-person system may be stable as long as it is calm, but since that

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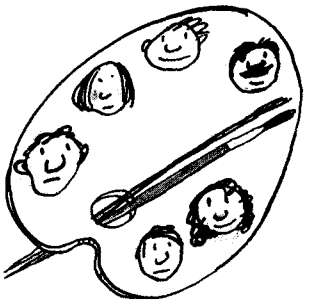

Three interconnected relationships can contain more anxiety than three separate relationships can, because pathways are in place that allow anxiety to be shifted around the system.

level of calm is very difficult to maintain, a two-person system is more accurately characterized as unstable. When the level of anxiety increases, typically a third person becomes involved in the tension of the twosome, creating a triangle. This involvement of a third person decreases anxiety in the twosome by spreading it among three relationships. Three interconnected relationships can contain more anxiety than three separate relationships can, because pathways are in place that allow anxiety to be shifted around the system. This shifting reduces the possibility that any one relationship will emotionally overheat. The ability to spread and shift tension, as well as to contain more of it, means that a triangle is more flexible and stable than a two-person system.

Triangles are forever—at least in families. Once the emotional circuitry of a triangle is in place, it usually outlives the people who participate in it. If one member of the triangle dies, another person usually replaces him. The actors come and go, but the play lives on through the generations. Children may act out a conflict that was never resolved between their great-grandparents. So a particular triangle was not necessarily created by its present participants; nor do triangles form anew or completely dissolve with the ebb and flow of anxiety.

When anxiety in the emotional field of a triangle is low, two people, the *insiders*, are comfortably close and the third is a less comfortable *outsider*. This is not a static system. Both insiders continually make adjustments to preserve their comfortable togetherness, lest one become uncomfortable and draw closer to the outsider. The outsider does not idly stand by but continually attempts to draw closer to one of the insiders. All the participants make predictable moves to achieve their ends. Here is an example: A husband, on the outside (in fact or fantasy) of the relationship between his wife and his oldest daughter, becomes sullen. The wife predictably reacts to his sullenness by focusing more on him and attempting to cheer him up. The daughter, in reaction to being on the outside in relation to her two parents, becomes overly solicitous toward her father. The mother, reacting to being on the outside in relation to her husband and her daughter, criticizes the daughter's physical appearance. The daughter responds defensively, and she and her mother have a long discussion to resolve their differences. The system is never still. So in calm periods the insiders are trying to preserve what they have and the outsider is trying to break into it.

There are several ways a twosome can incorporate a third person into its tension. The uncomfortable insider (A) can pull the outsider (C) into the situation through complaints to him about the other insider (B). If C responds sympathetically, taking sides with A, a comfortable closeness (based on undifferentiation) is established between A and C. B is the new outsider. The key element is side-taking. A and C blame B for the problems in the relationship between A and B. A twosome can also involve a third person in its conflict simply by allowing this person to be within earshot. The problem overflows onto him. Or the third person may play a very active role in getting himself into the middle of a problem between two others. Through years of training, such a person has learned to gravitate to the disharmony he senses in others, regardless of whether an invitation is actually extended. A poorly differentiated child often occupies this position relative to his parents. He predictably makes himself a problem whenever tension between his parents reaches a certain level. This draws one or both parents' focus to him, thus reducing the tension between them.

At moderate levels of tension the outcome of this shifting process in a triangle is one uncomfortable or conflicted relationship (between the outsider and one of the insiders) and two fairly comfortable ones. The discomfort or tension may shift from relationship to relationship, but at moderate levels of tension it can usually be contained within one relationship at a time. In the earlier example, the discomfort between A and B might have shifted to C and B, with C becoming angry at B and blaming B for A's unhappiness. When C assumes the function of being angry at B, this can allow A to become more comfortable with B.

This pattern is exceedingly common in families. For example, as long as an oldest daughter and her father are in conflict, harmony can be preserved between the parents and between the daughter and her mother. The process works in the following way: The mother adapts (on some issues) to the father to keep peace, which maintains harmony in the marriage. The daughter sympathizes with her mother's attitude that her husband treats her like a "doormat." The sympathy keeps the mother-and-daughter relationship in harmony. The marital tension does not disappear, however; instead, it is acted out as conflict between father and daughter. So the triangle still has two positive sides and one negative side. A calm two-person relationship between mother and daughter or husband and wife,

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in other words, may actually be a calm side of a triangle. The calmness is maintained at the expense of having a negative relationship in another side of the triangle (between father and daughter).

During high-stress periods the emotional process in a triangle assumes new characteristics. Now the outside position is the most comfortable and desired. Each member of an overly intense two-person relationship works to get an outside position in a triangle to escape the tensions of that relationship. A mother, caught in intense conflict with her son, may actively recruit the father to deal with the son. When the father attempts to do so, conflict erupts between him and the son and the mother, and the mother withdraws. The son may counter this move by attempting to precipitate conflict between his parents. He may plead with his mother to get the stern father off his back. When the anxiety subsides, the mother and son again get close and the father is excluded from their togetherness. Another example is a husband who, wanting to avoid a fight that would disturb his relationship with his mother, triggers conflict between his wife and his mother by complaining to his wife about his mother. The relationship between his wife and his mother is then regarded as the problem. This is not necessarily a diabolical scheme by the husband to make his wife and his mother miserable. It is often done without much awareness of what is happening. When tension decreases, the wife may again be pushed to the outside of the mother-son relationship. She then makes predictable moves to gain an inside position, perhaps saying, "You care more about your mother than you care about me!"

Interlocking Triangles

IT IS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE FOR A PERSON TO SHIFT THE forces in a triangle. When it is not possible, the anxiety spreads to other, interlocking triangles. For example, a father may withdraw in response to his wife's effort to involve him with their rebellious son. This exacerbates the tension between mother and son. The mother may then communicate her anxiety and frustration to another child, which involves that child in the tension. Conflict erupts between the two siblings when the newly involved one attempts to get the other to behave. Meanwhile the mother achieves an outside position. So in this situation, when the members of one triangle failed to solve the problem, the tension spilled over into another. Another example of interlocking triangles involves a father who, in response to his wife's distress, gets into conflict with the son. As tension mounts between father and son, the wife withdraws. The father now involves another child, and conflict shifts from the father-son relationship to the sibling relationship.

In a calm family, anxiety can be contained mostly in one central triangle. Under stress, however, the anxiety spreads to other family triangles and to triangles outside the family, in work and social systems.

Understanding the processes of triangles and interlocking triangles depends on seeing each corner of a triangle as a functioning position. What a person thinks, feels, says, and does is—to an extent that depends on his level of differentiation and level of anxiety—a product of his functioning position in a triangle. Similarly, what a person thinks, feels, says, and does has a function in promoting the process of the triangle. An example of the interplay between functioning position and intrapsychic state is a person's moving from an outside to an inside position in a triangle and experiencing a marked increase in his sense of well-being and a decrease in fantasies of self-destruction and anxiety-laden dreams. An example of the interplay between intrapsychic state and the triangling process is the following: If person A expresses to person C that he is angry at person B, this communication functions to draw A and C closer together. If C responds sympathetically to A, the response also functions to draw A and C closer. In addition, A's anger at B functions to maintain distance between A and B, thereby reinforcing the togetherness between A and C.

People often have pretty inflexible roles, or functioning positions, in triangles. These positions may dictate their behavior to the extent that it can be easily characterized. Sometimes one person can be characterized as the anxiety "generator," a second person as the anxiety "amplifier," and the third as the anxiety "dampener." The generator is typically accused of setting the emotional tone for the triangle (and family) and upsetting the other members. Although the generator may be the first person to get nervous about potential problems, he is not the cause of the anxiety that circulates in the triangle. The amplifier adds to the problem by his inability to stay calm when the generator is anxious and by exaggerating the severity of the problem. The dampener uses emotional distance to control his reactivity to the others, but at a certain level of tension he can be relied on to become overly responsible for the others in order to calm things down. By predictably serving this function, the dampener may reduce symptoms, but he reinforces the relationship process (the triangle). The pressure continually shifts, and no one in the triangle assumes responsibility for managing his own anxiety.

Another common example of fairly inflexible functioning positions is a triangle of two parents and a child in which the child functions as an emotional appendage of his parents. He chronically adapts his thoughts, feelings, and behavior to reduce tension in the parents. The child may lack control over his own life to such an extent that as an adult he becomes quite dysfunctional and is totally dependent on the parents. Nonetheless the child may appear to have more control over what happens than his parents do. Often the child or young adult is able to manipulate the parents into giving him what he wants. As a result of these manipulations he is characterized as "selfish and demanding." Observing the pressure he puts on the parents, outsiders often feel sorry for them and blame the child. Indeed, the parents may forsake many of their interests and goals to devote more time, energy, and money to the child. The parents do give up self in relationship to the child, but

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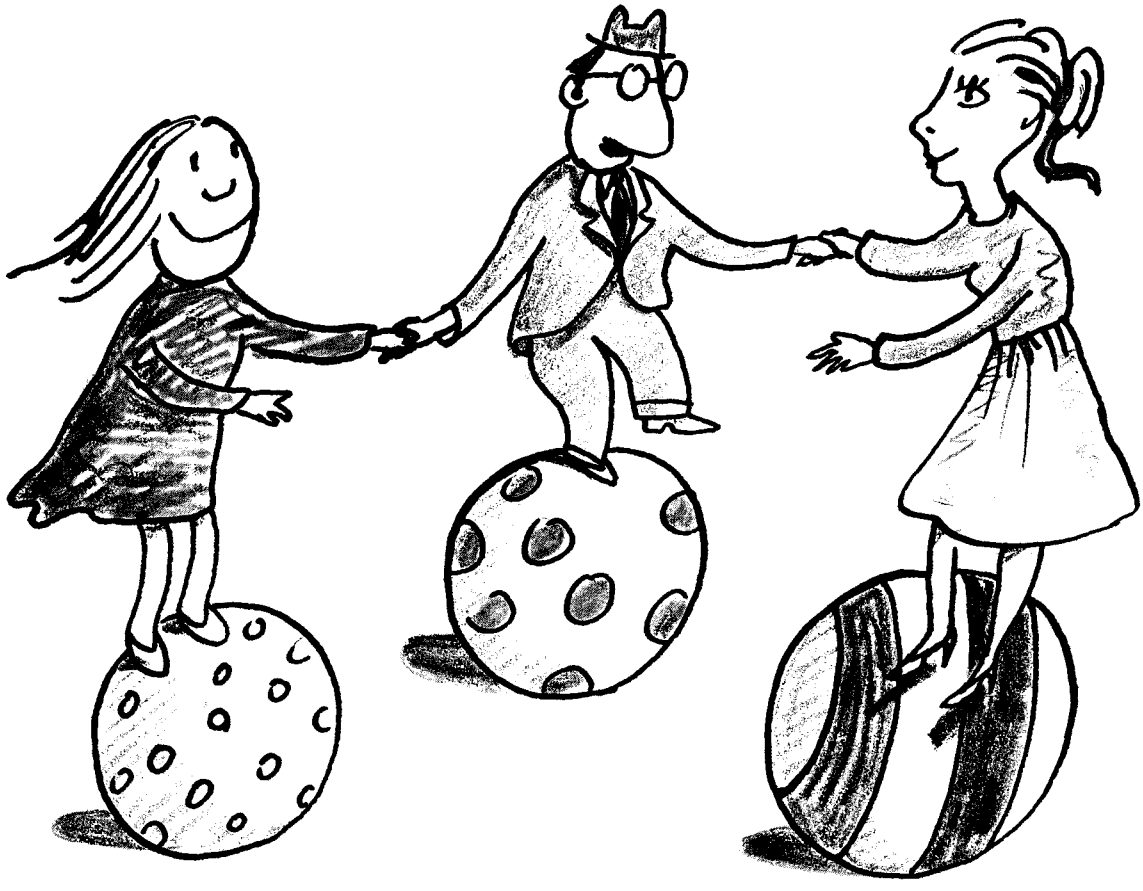

they do not give up as much as the child does. It is the child's functioning that is most seriously impaired, which is evidence that he is exerting the least amount of control. He wins battles but loses wars.

Parents never want such an outcome for any of their children. For the most part, they dedicate themselves to preventing it. However, their anxiety that things go well may obscure their ability to see that they are acting in ways that foster the very outcome they most want to prevent. As the child grows, the parents are increasingly in the position of acting stronger than they really are and the child is increasingly in the position of acting weaker than he really is. The nature of this functional reciprocity becomes evident in situations where one or both parents become dysfunctional and the child's functioning improves dramatically. A chronically schizophrenic person, previously bogged down in his delusions and hallucinations, may put them "on the back burner" in order to do what is necessary to take care of his parents. Many of the delusions may actually disappear. It is not necessary, or useful, to tell the schizophrenic person to do this; he does it automatically.

Triangles and Symptom Development

A BASIC TENET OF FAMILY SYSTEMS THERAPY IS THAT the tension in a two-person relationship will resolve automatically when contained within a system of three persons, one of whom is emotionally detached. In other words, despite togetherness urges to the contrary, a problem between two people can be resolved without the well-intentioned efforts of a third person to "fix" it. A resolution requires only that the third person be in adequate emotional contact with the other two and able to remain emotionally separate from them. The process of being in contact and emotionally separate is referred to as *detriangling*. If the twosome does not bring in a fourth person who is not detached but instead continues to relate primarily to the third person, who is detached, the twosome will bring their relationship back into equilibrium. This phenomenon has important implications for understanding symptom development.

A relationship between two moderately differentiated people provides a good illustration of the role of triangles in symptom development. The scenario may be played out as follows: The initial tension develops in the marriage. The wife, oriented to adapt to preserve harmony, internalizes the anxiety and becomes the uncomfortable member of the twosome. Her distress eventually becomes so great, however, that it overrides her automatic urge to avoid conflict, and she attempts to talk to her husband about her unhappiness. By the time she attempts to talk about it, she and her husband are both so upset and reactive that the discussion disintegrates. Further unproductive exchanges like this one gradually incline both people to avoid bringing up unpleasant subjects.

The emotional distance in the marriage makes escalations of tension less likely, but it does not relieve the wife's basic discomfort. She begins to talk about her unhappiness

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to her mother, and when her mother responds sympathetically, the wife begins to rely on her more and more for emotional support. The mother accepts the daughter's view that the husband is cold and unfeeling. Her anger at her daughter's husband supports the daughter's use of emotional distance to deal with the problem and accentuates her distancing behavior. The mother does not necessarily want to be a wedge in her daughter's marriage, even though she may act in such a way as to have that effect. Whenever motives are assigned to the behavior of any person in a triangle, awareness of a process that transcends the motives of individuals is lost.

As the daughter invests more emotional energy in the relationship with her mother and increases her distance from her husband, the husband, previously comfortable with a certain amount of marital distance, becomes quite reactive to what is now experienced as "excessive" distance. Feeling emotionally isolated and now more distressed than his wife, he pressures her to be more involved with him. He comes across as so needy and demanding, however, that his wife is prompted to distance herself further. Unsuccessful in his attempts to restore a comfortable level of togetherness, the husband starts drinking more. A certain amount of drinking can relieve some of these relationship anxieties and provide stability. If the drinking begins to impair the husband's functioning, however, it can seriously threaten the wife, because of her dependence on him. The wife becomes increasingly anxious about an actual or potential impairment of his functioning.

The wife's anxiety about her husband's symptoms directs more of her energy back into the marital relationship, but the focus is different from the one that existed prior to the increase in marital distance and the development of symptoms. The togetherness is now symptom-focused, with the underlying anxieties about the relationship largely obscured. The husband reacts to his wife's anxious focus on the drinking by using drinking for emotional insulation—a behavior that intensifies the whole cycle. The wife may sense that the anxiety-driven pressure to change that she exerts on her husband is making the problem worse, and she may try to back off. In her continuing talks with her mother, however, her mother's anxieties, accentuated by having had a father who "drank himself to death," infect the daughter, increasing her preoccupation with and need to do something about her *husband's* problem.

If the wife, when she became sufficiently uncomfortable to involve a third person in the marital problems, had encountered someone who could have remained objective and emotionally detached, the outcome might have been significantly different. A third person who can maintain differentiation in the face of emotionally charged communications from others does not permit the problem to be triangled out of the relationship. The effect of an involved but detriangled third person is to nudge the marital partners toward accepting more responsibility for the problem and attaching more importance to working it out *between* them. Acceptance of responsibility for one's own problems and motivation to work out those problems within the relationship where they have surfaced appear to be the ingredients necessary to override the tendency to allow feelings and subjectivity to govern interactions.

Another kind of triangle in which anxiety may be played out is that of a mother and two children. The mother may be anxious lest her children feel they are not being given equal attention, equal "love." Her anxieties are translated into actions that communicate that she is assuming responsibility for making the children feel they are being treated equally. In response to this, each child grows up feeling that his mother *is* responsible for making him feel equally "loved" and for correcting any perceived deficits in fair treatment. Each child becomes highly sensitive about the amount of attention he thinks he receives relative to the amount the sibling receives. This can result in continual fighting between the siblings and mutual dislike, an outcome the mother had dedicated herself to preventing. This sibling conflict, while often explained on the basis of "sibling rivalry," is actually just one side of a triangle—the side where the triangle's tensions are usually acted out. The process of the triangle of the mother and two children cannot be adequately understood, of course, out of the context of the way this triangle interlocks with others in the family. For example, the father may criticize his wife for not treating the children equally. When he does this, the triangle consists of the mother at one corner, the father at the second corner, and the two children at the third corner. In a nuclear family of two parents and two children there are four *uncomplicated* (one person at each corner) triangles. With the addition of just one more child, the number of triangles jumps to ten! Some of these triangles are barely active; others are very active. The active ones strongly influence one another.

Detriangling

THE PROCESS OF DETRIANGLING DEPENDS ON RECognizing subtle as well as more obvious ways in which one is triangled by others and in which one attempts to triangle others. If one's father says, "My sister has treated me unfairly and you, as my son, should have nothing more to do with her," it is not difficult to recognize that this is a triangling remark. If triangling were always this obvious, relationships would be considerably easier to understand and manage. Subtler triangling messages are communicated by facial expressions, tones of voice, changes in body posture, and other nonverbal signals. What is actually said is important, but words expressed in one tone of voice may activate a triangle while in another tone of voice they may not.

Detriangling is probably the most important technique in family systems therapy. If it is learned simply as a technique, however, detriangling maneuvers are not likely to accomplish their intent. The outcome of a detriangling comment or action is more predictable when the comment is made or the action taken on the basis of a way of think-

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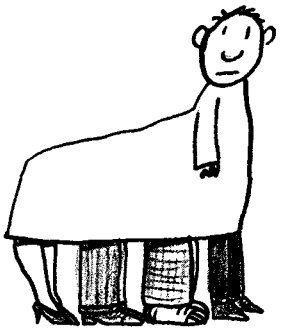

In a nuclear family of two parents and two children there are four triangles. With the addition of just one more child, the number of triangles jumps to ten!

ing rather than as a technique the person has been taught by someone like a therapist. This way of thinking is a systems conceptualization of human behavior, in which the cause of a problem is not ascribed to a person or an event but rather to the emotional process that links people and events. The ability to see systems or process seems to foster a more emotionally neutral attitude about human behavior and clinical dysfunctions than that fostered by cause-and-effect thinking. The more one can be emotionally neutral about the relationship process between others, the more effective will be a detriangling maneuver.

Emotional neutrality does not mean a refusal to approve or disapprove of particular aspects of human behavior, and it does not mean making rules for oneself about not passing judgment on people's actions. A person who adheres to rules usually appears to be more neutral than he actually is. Nor does neutrality mean straddling fences or being wishy-washy. One can have a very clear position with respect to what occurs in a family and in society and still be emotionally neutral. Dogmatic positions, a lack of position, and efforts to change others all betray the absence of emotional neutrality. In essence, neutrality is reflected in the ability to define self without being emotionally invested in one's own viewpoint or in changing the viewpoints of others.

If a person can achieve more neutrality, or detachment, while in contact with the triangles that he is most connected to emotionally and then act on the basis of that neutrality, the tensions between the other two members in each of the triangles will be reduced. Emotional neutrality is reflected in a number of ways, two of which are especially relevant to triangles: first, the ability to see both sides of a relationship process between two others, and second, the ability not to cloud one's thinking about that process with notions about what "should" be. For example, it is important (for purposes of differentiation and detriangling) to be able to see the parts both people play in promoting an intense symbiosis between a mother and a schizophrenic son, and it is equally important to be able to be in contact with such a relationship without defining it as sick or abnormal or bad or pathetic—as something that "should not" be. Intolerance of aspects of the human process is a manifestation of being triangled into it.

Seeing both sides of a relationship problem can be very difficult, for one person often appears to be causing the other's distress: One person seems a victim, the other a victimizer. One person appears to be sick, and the other trying to make the best of a difficult situation. A teenager on drugs appears to be the main cause of a family's turmoil.

An important aspect of understanding triangles and detriangling is being able to recognize a communication as reflecting the activity of a triangle rather than being a straightforward comment by one person to another. A brief clinical example, from a nuclear family that consisted of the two parents and four daughters, can illustrate this.

The father died after all the children were grown. The youngest daughter (F) remarked to the next-to-youngest daughter (E), "Why were you so nasty to me when we were kids?" The nonverbal signals that F delivered with the remark indicated that a pretty intense degree of emotion was attached to it. In addition, the intensity of the anger and guilt in E's feeling response to the remark indicated that she was still strongly involved in a process that went back more than twenty-five years, to childhood. E's automatic response was to defend herself and to criticize her younger sister for "acting like a child." Exchanges of this nature in the past had resulted in the two sisters' not speaking to each other for extended periods and the mother's attempting to serve as mediator in "their" conflict.

The triangle involved here (although, again, every triangle interlocks with others) is that of the mother (B) and the two sisters. The youngest sister, F, achieved the least emotional separation from her parents. Her mother was heavily involved in her life and greatly concerned with the older sisters' attitudes toward her. The older sisters were often critical of the youngest, reacting to how much time and attention she received. The mother interpreted the older daughters' attitudes toward the younger one as "sibling rivalry" and repeatedly tried to get them to change those attitudes. The mother responded to the younger daughter's complaints about the treatment she received from her sisters with comments like "They are just being mean." The mother was locked into the process just as the daughters were, and, for the most part, unwittingly reinforced it with her actions and remarks.

E's attitude when she left home was that she had not been given all the love and attention she needed. She viewed herself as a somewhat deprived person, a victim of a situation in which another child was the favorite. Not surprisingly, E left home with a tendency to overmother seemingly helpless and needy people, reflecting her fu-

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sion with her mother's attitudes and feelings. She married, and focused most of her energy on her new family, which soon included two children. She maintained superficial contact with her mother and very little contact with her younger sister. When F left home, she cut herself off from the family even more than E had done and had more problems managing her life than the other sisters did. F's cutoff from her mother was presumably related to wanting to avoid the childlike role she characteristically assumed whenever she spent even a few days with her. The mother's reluctance to bridge the cutoff from F presumably reflected her own anxieties about dealing with her.

In an effort to work on some problems she had encountered in her nuclear family, E began to renew her contacts with her family of origin. Part of her effort was to have more contact with her younger sister. In her contacts with F, E observed a tendency to feel sorry for her and the necessity to restrain urges to treat her like a child (an obvious replay of one aspect of the childhood triangle). E also increased her contact with her mother. Her sister and her mother, however, did not have more contact with each other. Distance was maintained, and each attempted to use E as a source of information about the other.

A major change occurred after the youngest sister gave birth to her first child. Soon after the birth, B went to visit F for the first time in several years. It was a long visit and "just like old times." Perhaps related to the presence of the new baby, a harmonious closeness was rekindled between the two. The mother was once again the daughter's protector, and the daughter leaned on her for support. Potential problems were averted by focusing on the new baby. It was after that visit that the youngest daughter, previously appreciative of E's renewed efforts to be in contact with her, accused E of having been nasty to her and demanded an explanation. It was a fascinating reactivation of the triangle.

Because E has failed to recognize that F's accusations are part of a long-standing triangle and has responded angrily and defensively, the tension of the triangle is renewed between the two sisters. To detriangle effectively, E has to accomplish several things. First, she has to see the process of the triangle fairly accurately. Second, she must overcome an attitude that has colored much of her behavior previously—the attitude that her emotional lot in life would be better if her mother had given her all the attention she felt she needed when she was growing up. E's anger about this and her feeling that she was treated unfairly was an undercurrent in many of her interactions with the family. To detriangle, E also must recognize the influence of feelings and subjectivity on her behavior and gain some control over automatic responses based on them.

Guided by an understanding of the process of triangles, E could make a detriangling remark to her sister, such as, "Yes, I have been nasty to you. It's my jealousy over the fact that you could always meet Mother's needs better than I could." This response avoids a fight with F and is positive about the togetherness that exists between the youngest sister and the mother. In addition, rather than emphasizing the mother's involvement with the sister, a highly charged emotional issue, the response emphasizes the sister's automatic tendency to adapt to relieve her mother's anxiety. The level of togetherness that again exists between mother and youngest daughter serves a function in the mother's life as well as in the sister's life. Having communicated to her sister in a way that encouraged togetherness between her and her mother, E could then send her mother a note emphasizing how much the mother's recent visit had boosted F's spirits and encouraging more visits in the near future. E could conclude by saying, "Mother, nobody can make my little sister feel more secure than you." The remark highlights the togetherness between the mother and F, exaggerates it, and encourages it.

It would be simpler if one could talk straightforwardly to people who are attempting to triangle one into their problem. It would be simpler if E could say to her sister, "We are acting out one side of a triangle." The problem is that F may not see it that way. It was difficult enough for E to see it that way. Triangles are governed by what might be called an emotional logic, and they respond to comments and actions directed at that emotionality. People acting out the process of a triangle have an amazing ability to ignore the most rational and well-represented explanations for what is occurring. Another reason for not instructing or enlightening the family about what one thinks others are doing is that it is usually an attempt to influence the family, which runs counter to differentiation of self.

Triangles are everywhere, reaching out to envelop one in the problems of others. Anyone can be triangled, and anyone can triangle others. Maintaining one's differentiation keeps the problem in the relationship from which it is attempting to escape. Maintaining one's differentiation keeps one's own problems from infecting others in ways that interfere with the resolution of relationship issues. Maintaining one's differentiation and detriangling is not an attempt to manipulate or control others but a way of dealing with others' attempts to manipulate and control oneself. If one's efforts to detriangle are reasonably effective and if one stays in adequate contact with the two other members of the triangle, some stabilization and improvement in their relationship will occur. When one member of a triangle assumes more responsibility for his own functioning, the others will follow suit. Each member of a twosome will raise his functional level of differentiation in response when a detached third person maintains a higher level of differentiation than either member of the twosome.

Understanding the forces that make the family an emotional unit, triangles being the "molecules" of that unit, depends on viewing human behavior in the context of the emotional forces that govern all life. Human beings are unique, however, because their intellectual system enables them to modify the influence of the emotional system on their behavior. Man has a choice. □

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FIRST ENCOUNTERS

GERTRUDE STEIN AND EDITH SITWELL

THIS IS IN FACT a first, middle, and (arguably) final encounter. The story begins in 1924, when Edith Sitwell came to Paris and called at 27, rue de Fleurus, where Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas lived and Cezannes and Picassos hung on the walls. Gertrude's expectations were guarded: Edith had discussed her work in English journals, not always with enthusiasm. But Gertrude's impression was favorable. Edith Sitwell was very tall, Gertrude noted—beautiful, with a most distinguished nose, and she walked as if advancing and withdrawing at the same time. Alice recalled a double-breasted coat with large buttons. Edith likened Gertrude to an Easter Island idol. They talked about poetry: Sitwell's unorthodox, mocking poems shocked the public as much as did Stein's prose. Edith admired Gertrude's prose—how she "threw a word into the air," freeing it of past associations.

More visits were exchanged, and on her return home Edith lobbied for Gertrude to lecture at Cambridge and Oxford. This was arranged, and Edith, with her brothers Osbert and Sacheverell, went in escort, aristocratic cranes in attendance on a plump partridge. To Edith's embarrassment, Gertrude closed the Oxford lecture with her word portrait "Sitwell Edith Sitwell," which began, "Introduces have and heard. Miss Edith Sitwell have and heard," and continued in kind.

Perhaps more rivalry existed than either cared to confront. Some years later in Paris, Edith was asked by Sylvia Beach, the proprietor of the bookshop Shakespeare & Company, to speak at one of her "evenings" on the subject of Gertrude Stein. At nine o'clock the literary *monde*—Gertrude and Alice included—gathered in anticipation. Edith looked coolly down her aquiline nose, placed the tips of her long white fingers together, and recited a little Shakespeare. She moved on to other Elizabethans. Then she read from her own poetry. The evening ended without a mention of Gertrude Stein. Miss Edith Sitwell had been heard. *—Nancy Caldwell Sorel*

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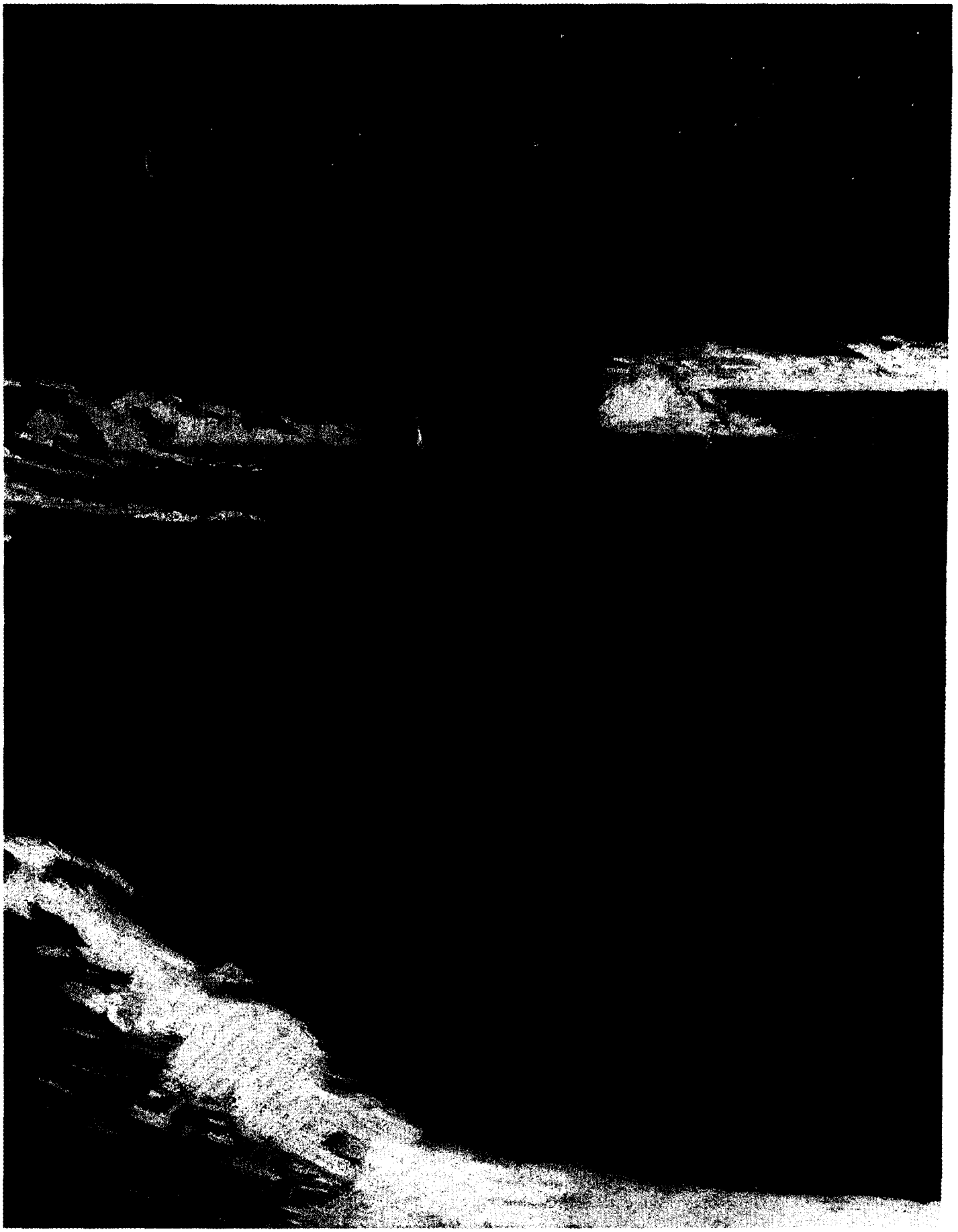

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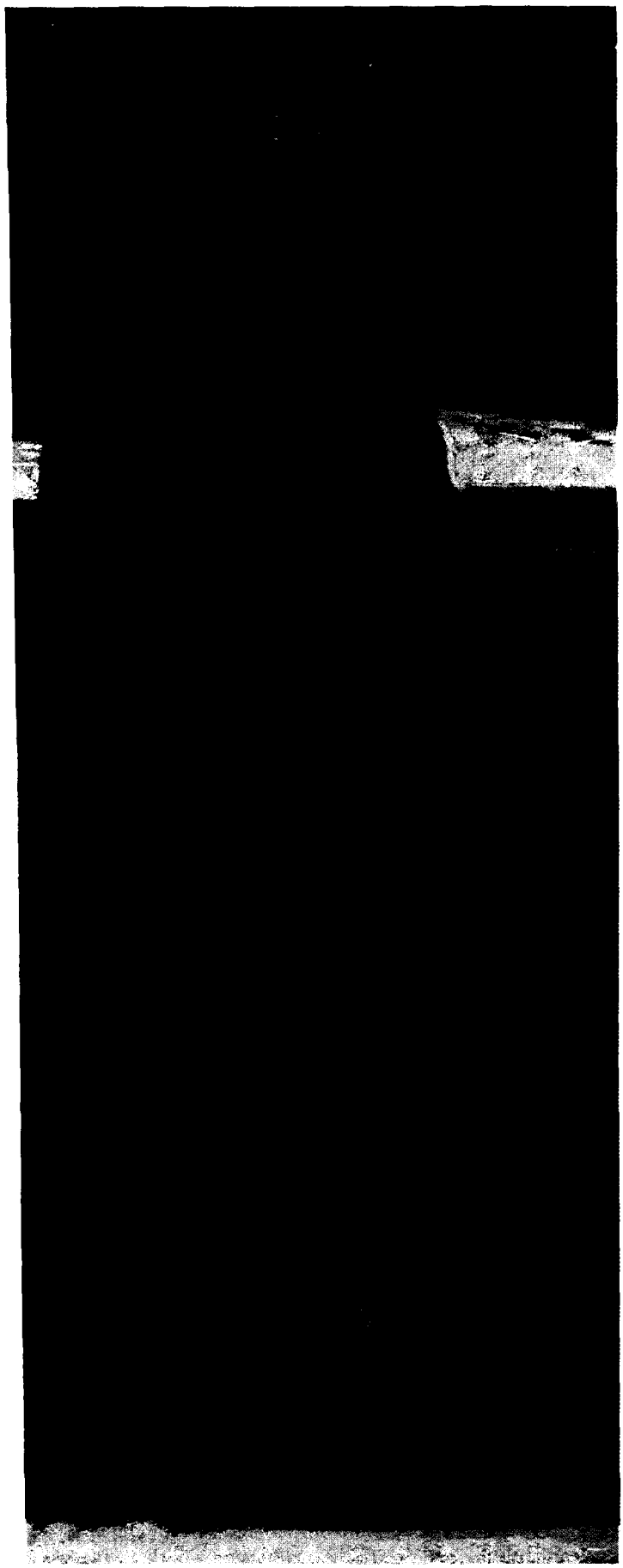

A Short Story

FENSTAD'S MOTHER

BY CHARLES BAXTER

ON SUNDAY MORNING AFTER COMMUNION FENSTAD drove across town to visit his mother. Behind the wheel, he exhaled with his hand flat in front of his mouth to determine if the wine on his breath could be detected. He didn't think so. Fenstad's mother was a lifelong social progressive who was amused by her son's churchgoing, and, wine or no wine, she could guess where he had been. She had spent her life in the company of rebels and deviationists, and she recognized all their styles.

Passing a frozen pond in the city park, Fenstad slowed down to watch the skaters, many of whom he knew by name and skating style. From a distance they were dots of color ready for flight, frictionless. To express grief on skates seemed almost impossible, and Fenstad liked that. He parked his car on a residential block and took out his skates from the back seat, where he kept them all winter. With his fingertips he touched the wooden blade guards, thinking of the time. He checked his watch; he had fifteen minutes.

Out on the ice, still wearing his churchy Sunday-morning suit, tie, and overcoat, but now circling the outside edge of the pond with his bare hands in his overcoat pockets, Fenstad admired the overcast sky and luxuriated in the brittle cold. He was active and alert in winter but felt sleepy throughout the summer. He passed a little girl in a pink jacket, pushing a tiny chair over the ice. He waved to his friend Ann, an off-duty cop, practicing her twirls. He waved to other friends. Without exception they waved back. As usual, he was impressed by the way skates improved human character.

Twenty minutes later, in the doorway of her apartment, his mother said, "Your cheeks are red." She glanced down at his trousers, damp with melted snow. "You've been skating." She kissed him on the cheek and turned to walk into her living room. "Skating after church? Isn't that some sort of error?"

"It's just happiness," Fenstad said. Quickly he checked

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her apartment for any signs of memory loss or depression. He found none and immediately felt relief. The apartment smelled of soap and Lysol, the signs of an old woman who wouldn't tolerate nonsense. Out on her coffee table, as usual, were the letters she was writing to her congressman and to political dictators around the globe. Fenstad's mother pleaded for enlightened behavior and berated the dictators for their bad political habits.

She grasped the arm of the sofa and let herself down slowly. Only then did she smile. "How's your soul, Harry?" she asked. "What's the news?"

He smiled back and smoothed his hair. Martin Luther King's eyes locked into his from the framed picture on the wall opposite him. In the picture King was shaking hands with Fenstad's mother, the two of them surrounded by smiling faces. "My soul's okay, Ma," he said. "It's a hard project. I'm always working on it." He reached down for a chocolate-chunk cookie from a box on top of the television. "Who brought you these?"

"Your daughter Sharon. She came to see me on Friday." Fenstad's mother tilted her head at him. "You *want* to be a good person, but she's the real article. Goodness comes to her without any effort at all. She says you have a new girlfriend. A pharmacist this time. Susan, is it?" Fenstad nodded. "Harry, why does your generation always have to find the right person? Why can't you learn to live with the wrong person? Sooner or later everyone's wrong. Love isn't the most important thing, Harry, far from it. Why can't you see that? I still don't comprehend why you couldn't live with Eleanor." Eleanor was Fenstad's ex-wife. They had been divorced for a decade, but Fenstad's mother hoped for a reconciliation.

"Come on, Ma," Fenstad said. "Over and done with, gone and gone." He took another cookie.

"You live with somebody so that you're living with *somebody*, and then you go out and do the work of the world. I don't understand all this pickiness about lovers. In a pinch anybody'll do, Harry, believe me."

On the side table was a picture of her late husband, Fenstad's mild, middle-of-the-road father. Fenstad glanced at the picture and let the silence hang between them before asking, "How are you, Ma?"

"I'm all right." She leaned back in the sofa, whose springs made a strange, almost human groan. "I want to get out. I spend too much time in this place in January. You should expand my horizons. Take me somewhere."

"Come to my composition class," Fenstad said. "I'll pick you up at dinnertime on Tuesday. Eat early."

"They'll notice me," she said, squinting. "I'm too old."

"I'll introduce you," her son said. "You'll fit right in."

FENSTAD WROTE BROCHURES IN THE PUBLICITY DEpartment of a computer company during the day, and taught an extension English-composition class at the downtown campus of the state university two nights a week. He didn't need the money; he taught the class because he liked teaching strangers and because he enjoyed the sense of hope that classrooms held for him. This hopefulness and didacticism he had picked up from his mother.

On Tuesday night she was standing at the door of the retirement apartment building, dressed in a dark blue overcoat—her best. Her stylishness was belied slightly by a pair of old fuzzy red earmuffs. Inside the car Fenstad noticed that she had put on perfume, unusual for her. Leaning back, she gazed out contentedly at the nighttime lights.

"Who's in this group of students?" she asked. "Working-class people, I hope. Those are the ones you should be teaching. Anything else is just a career."

"Oh, they work, all right." He looked at his mother and saw, as they passed under a streetlight, a combination of sadness and delicacy in her face. Her usual mask of tough optimism seemed to be deserting her. He braked at a red light and said, "I have a hairdresser and a garage mechanic and a housewife, a Mrs. Nelson, and three guys who're sanitation workers. Plenty of others. One guy you'll really like is a young black man with glasses who sits in the back row and reads *Workers' Vanguard* and Bakunin during class. He's brilliant. I don't know why he didn't test out of this class. His name's York Follette, and he's—"

"I want to meet him," she said quickly. She scowled at the moonlit snow. "A man with ideas. People like that have gone out of my life." She looked over at her son. "What I hate about being my age is how *nice* everyone tries to be. I was never nice, but now everybody is pelting me with sugar cubes." She opened her window an inch and let the cold air blow over her, ruffling her stiff gray hair.

WHEN THEY ARRIVED AT THE SCHOOL, SNOW HAD started to fall, and at the other end of the parking lot a police car's flashing light beamed long crimson rays through the dense flakes. Fenstad's mother walked deliberately toward the door, shaking her head mistrustfully at the building and the police. Approaching the steps, she took her son's hand. "I liked the columns on the old buildings," she said, "the old university buildings, I mean. I liked Greek Revival better than this Modernist-bunker stuff." Inside, she blinked in the light at the smooth, waxed linoleum floors and cement-block walls. She held up her hand to shade her eyes. Fenstad took her elbow to guide her over the snow melting in puddles in the entryway. "I never asked you what you're teaching tonight."

"Logic," Fenstad said.

"Ah." She smiled and nodded. "Dialectics!"

"Not quite. Just logic."

She shrugged. She was looking at the clumps of students standing in the glare of the hallway, drinking coffee from paper cups and smoking cigarettes in the general conversational din. She wasn't used to such noise: she stopped in the middle of the corridor underneath a wall clock and stared happily in no particular direction. With her eyes

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shut she breathed in the close air, smelling of wet overcoats and smoke, and Fenstad remembered how much his mother had always liked smoke-filled rooms, where ideas fought each other, and where some of those ideas died.

"Come on," he said, taking her hand again. Inside Fenstad's classroom six people sat in the angular postures of pre-boredom. York Follette was already in the back row, his copy of *Workers' Vanguard* shielding his face. Fenstad's mother headed straight for him and sat down in the desk next to his. Fenstad saw them shake hands, and in two minutes they were talking in low, rushed murmurs. He saw York Follette laugh quietly and nod. What was it that blacks saw and appreciated in his mother? They had always liked her—written to her, called her, checked up on her—and Fenstad wondered if they recognized something in his mother that he himself had never been able to see.

At 7:35 most of the students had arrived and were talking to each other vigorously, as if they didn't want Fenstad to start and thought they could delay him. He stared at them, and when they wouldn't quiet down, he made himself rigid and said, "Good evening. We have a guest tonight." Immediately the class grew silent. He held his arm out straight, indicating with a flick of his hand the old woman in the back row. "My mother," he said. "Clara Fenstad." For the first time all semester his students appeared to be paying attention: they turned around collectively and looked at Fenstad's mother, who smiled and waved. A few of the students began to applaud; others joined in. The applause was quiet but apparently genuine. Fenstad's mother brought herself slowly to her feet and made a suggestion of a bow. Two of the students sitting in front of her turned around and began to talk to her. At the front of the class Fenstad started his lecture on logic, but his mother wouldn't quiet down. This was a class for adults. They were free to do as they liked.

Lowering his head and facing the blackboard, Fenstad reviewed problems in logic, following point by point the outline set down by the textbook: *post hoc* fallacies, false authorities, begging the question, circular reasoning, *ad hominem* arguments, all the rest. Explaining these problems, his back turned, he heard sighs of boredom, boldly expressed. Occasionally he glanced at the back of the room. His mother was watching him carefully, and her face was expressing all the complexity of dismay. Dismay radiated from her. Her disappointment wasn't personal, because his mother didn't think that people as individuals were at fault for what they did. As usual, her disappointed hope was located in history and in the way people agreed with already existing histories.

She was angry with him for collaborating with grammar. She would call it unconsciously installed authority. Then she would find other names for it.

"All right," he said loudly, trying to make eye contact with someone in the room besides his mother, "let's try some examples. Can anyone tell me what, if anything, is wrong with the following sentence? 'I, like most people, have a unique problem.'"

The three sanitation workers, in the third row, began to laugh. Fenstad caught himself glowering and singled out the middle one.

"Yes, it is funny, isn't it?"

The man in the middle smirked and looked at the floor. "I was just thinking of my unique problem."

"Right," Fenstad said. "But what's wrong with saying, 'I, like most people, have a unique problem'?"

"Solving it?" This was Mrs. Nelson, who sat by the window so that she could gaze at the tree outside, lit by a streetlight. All through class she looked at the tree as if it were a lover.

"Solving what?"

"Solving the problem you have. What is the problem?"

"That's actually not what I'm getting at," Fenstad said. "Although it's a good *related* point. I'm asking what might be wrong logically with that sentence."

"It depends," Harold Ronson said. He worked in a service station and sometimes came to class wearing his work shirt with his name tag, HAROLD, stitched into it. "It depends on what your problem is. You haven't told us your problem."

"No," Fenstad said, "my problem is *not* the problem." He thought of Alice in Wonderland and felt, physically, as if he himself were getting small. "Let's try this again. What might be wrong with saying that most people have a unique problem?"

"You shouldn't be so critical," Timothy Melville said. "You should look on the bright side, if possible."

"What?"

"He's right," Mrs. Nelson said. "Most people have unique problems, but many people do their best to help themselves, such as taking night classes or working at meditation."

"No doubt that's true," Fenstad said. "But why can't most people have a unique problem?"

"Oh, I disagree," Mrs. Nelson said, still looking at her tree. Fenstad glanced at it and saw that it was crested with snow. It *was* beautiful. No wonder she looked at it. "I believe that most people do have unique problems. They just shouldn't talk about them all the time."

"Can anyone," Fenstad asked, looking at the back wall and hoping to see something there that was not wall, "can anyone give me an example of a unique problem?"

"Divorce," Barb Kjellerud said. She sat near the door and knitted during class. She answered questions without looking up. "Divorce is unique."

"No, it isn't!" Fenstad said, failing in the crucial moment to control his voice. He and his mother exchanged glances. In his mother's face for a split second was the history of her compassionate, ambivalent attention to him. "Divorce is not unique." He waited to calm himself. "It's everywhere. Now try again. Give me a unique problem."

Silence. "This is a trick question," Arlene Hubbly said. "I'm sure it's a trick question."

"Not necessarily. Does anyone know what *unique* means?"

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"One of a kind," York Follette said, gazing at Fenstad with dry amusement. Sometimes he took pity on Fenstad and helped him out of jams. Fenstad's mother smiled and nodded.

"Right," Fenstad crowed, racing toward the blackboard as if he were about to write something. "So let's try again. Give me a unique problem."

"You give *us* a unique problem," one of the sanitation workers said. Fenstad didn't know whether he'd been given a statement or a command. He decided to treat it as a command.

"All right," he said. He stopped and looked down at his shoes. Maybe it *was* a trick question. He thought for ten seconds. Problem after problem presented itself to him. He thought of poverty, of the assaults on the earth, of the awful complexities of love. "I can't think of one," Fenstad said. His hands went into his pockets.

"That's because problems aren't personal," Fenstad's mother said from the back of the room. "They're collective." She waited while several students in the class sat up and nodded. "And people must work together on their solutions." She talked for another two minutes, taking the subject out of logic and putting it neatly in politics, where she knew it belonged.

THE SNOW HAD STOPPED BY THE TIME THE CLASS was over. Fenstad took his mother's arm and escorted her to the car. After letting her down on the passenger side and starting the engine, he began to clear the front windshield. He didn't have a scraper and had forgotten his gloves, so he was using his bare hands. When he brushed the snow away on his mother's side, she looked out at him, surprised, a terribly aged Sleeping Beauty awakened against her will.

Once the car had warmed up, she was in a gruff mood and repositioned herself under the seat belt while making quiet but aggressive remarks. The sight of the new snow didn't seem to calm her. "Logic," she said at last. "That wasn't logic. Those are just rhetorical tactics. It's filler and drudgery."

"I don't want to discuss it now."

"All right. I'm sorry. Let's talk about something more pleasant."

They rode together in silence. Then she began to shake her head. "Don't take me home," she said. "I want to have a spot of tea somewhere before I go back. A nice place where they serve tea, all right?"

He parked outside an all-night restaurant with huge front plate-glass windows; it was called Country Bob's. He held his mother's elbow from the car to the door. At the door, looking back to make sure that he had turned off his headlights, he saw his tracks and his mother's in the snow. His were separate footprints, but hers formed two long lines.

Inside, at the table, she sipped her tea and gazed at her son for a long time. "Thanks for the adventure, Harry. I do appreciate it. What're you doing in class next week? Oh, I remember. How-to papers. That should be interesting."

"Want to come?"

"Very much. I'll keep quiet next time, if you want me to."

Fenstad shook his head. "It's okay. It's fun having you along. You can say whatever you want. The students loved you. I knew you'd be a sensation, and you were. They'd probably rather have you teaching the class than me."

He noticed that his mother was watching something going on behind him, and Fenstad turned around in the booth so that he could see what it was. At first all he saw was a woman, a young woman with long hair wet from snow and hanging in clumps, talking in the aisle to two young men, both of whom were nodding at her. Then she moved on to the next table. She spoke softly. Fenstad couldn't hear her words, but he saw the solitary customer to whom she was speaking shake his head once, keeping his eyes down. Then the woman saw Fenstad and his mother. In a moment she was standing in front of them.

She wore two green plaid flannel shirts and a thin torn jacket. Like Fenstad, she wore no gloves. Her jeans were patched, and she gave off a strong smell, something like hay, Fenstad thought, mixed with tar and sweat. He looked down at her feet and saw that she was wearing penny loafers with no socks. Coins, old pennies, were in both shoes; the leather was wet and cracked. He looked in the woman's face. Under a hat that seemed to collapse on either side of her head, the woman's face was thin and chalk-white except for the fatigue lines under her eyes. The eyes themselves were bright blue, beautiful, and crazy. To Fenstad, she looked desperate, percolating slightly with insanity, and he was about to say so to his mother when the woman bent down toward him and said, "Mister, can you spare any money?"

Involuntarily, Fenstad looked toward the kitchen, hoping that the manager would spot this person and take her away. When he looked back again, his mother was taking her blue coat off, wriggling in the booth to free her arms from the sleeves. Stopping and starting again, she appeared to be stuck inside the coat; then she lifted herself up, trying to stand, and with a quick, quiet groan slipped the coat off. She reached down and folded the coat over and held it toward the woman. "Here," she said. "Here's my coat. Take it before my son stops me."

"Mother, you can't." Fenstad reached forward to grab the coat, but his mother pulled it away from him.

When Fenstad looked back at the woman, her mouth was open, showing several gray teeth. Her hands were outstretched, and he understood, after a moment, that this was a posture of refusal, a gesture saying no, and that the woman wasn't used to it and did it awkwardly. Fenstad's mother was standing and trying to push the coat toward the woman, not toward her hands but lower, at waist level, and she was saying, "Here, here, here, here." The sound, like a human birdcall, frightened Fenstad, and he stood up quickly, reached for his wallet, and removed the first two

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bills he could find, two twenties. He grabbed the woman's chapped, ungloved left hand.

"Take these," he said, putting the two bills in her icy palm, "for the love of God, and please go."

He was close to her face. Tonight he would pray for her. For a moment the woman's expression was vacant. His mother was still pushing the coat at her, and the woman was unsteadily bracing herself. The woman's mouth was open, and her stagnant-water breath washed over him. "I know you," she said. "You're my little baby cousin."

"Go away, please," Fenstad said. He pushed at her. She turned, clutching his money. He reached around to put his hands on his mother's shoulders. "Ma," he said, "she's gone now. Mother, sit down. I gave her money for a coat." His mother fell down on her side of the booth, and her blue coat rolled over on the bench beside her, showing the label and the shiny inner lining. When he looked up, the woman who had been begging had disappeared, though he could still smell her odor, an essence of wretchedness.

"Excuse me, Harry," his mother said. "I have to go to the bathroom."

She rose and walked toward the front of the restaurant, turned a corner, and was out of sight. Fenstad sat and tried to collect himself. When the waiter came, a boy with an earring and red hair in a flattop, Fenstad just shook his head and said, "More tea." He realized that his mother hadn't taken off her earmuffs, and the image of his mother in the ladies' room with her earmuffs on gave him a fit of uneasiness. After getting up from the booth and following the path that his mother had taken, he stood outside the ladies'-room door and, when no one came in or out, he knocked. He waited for a decent interval. Still hearing no answer, he opened the door.

His mother was standing with her arms down on either side of the first sink. She was holding herself there, her eyes following the hot water as it poured from the tap around the bright porcelain sink down into the drain, and she looked furious. Fenstad touched her and she snapped toward him.

"Your logic!" she said.

He opened the door for her and helped her back to the booth. The second cup of tea had been served, and Fenstad's mother sipped it in silence. They did not converse. When she had finished, she said, "All right. I do feel better now. Let's go."

At the curb in front of her apartment building he leaned forward and kissed her on the cheek. "Pick me up next Tuesday," she said. "I want to go back to that class." He nodded. He watched as she made her way past the security guard at the front desk; then he put his car into drive and started home.

That night he skated in the dark for an hour with his friend, Susan, the pharmacist. She was an excellent skater; they had met on the ice. She kept late hours and, like Fenstad, enjoyed skating at night. She listened attentively to his story about his mother and the woman in the restaurant. To his great relief she recommended no course of action. She listened. She didn't believe in giving advice, even when asked.

THE FOLLOWING TUESDAY, FENSTAD'S MOTHER WAS again in the back row next to York Follette. One of the fluorescent lights overhead was flickering, which gave the room, Fenstad thought, a sinister quality, like a debtors' prison or a refuge for the homeless. He'd been thinking about such people for the entire week. For seven days now he had caught whiffs of the woman's breath in the air, and one morning, Friday, he thought he caught a touch of the rotten-celery smell on his own breath, after a particularly difficult sales meeting.

Tonight was how-to night. The students were expected to stand at the front of the class and read their papers, instructing their peers and answering questions if necessary. Starting off, and reading her paper in a frightened monotone, Mrs. Nelson told the class how to bake a cheese soufflé. Arlene Hubbly's paper was about mushroom hunting. Fenstad was put off by the introduction. "The advantage to mushrooms," Arlene Hubbly read, "is that they are delicious. The disadvantage to mushrooms is that they can make you sick, even die." But then she explained how to recognize the common shaggymane by its cylindrical cap and dark tufts; she drew a model on the board. She warned the class against the *Clitocybe illudens*, the Jack-o'-Lantern. "Never eat a mushroom like this one or *any* mushroom that glows in the dark. Take heed!" she said, fixing her gaze on the class. Fenstad saw his mother taking rapid notes. Harold Ronson, the mechanic, reading his own prose painfully and slowly, told the class how to get rust spots out of their automobiles. Again Fenstad noticed his mother taking notes. York Follette told the class about the proper procedures for laying down attic insulation and how to know when enough was enough, so that a homeowner wouldn't be

SWALLOW

The only one
on this pond, all the rest
a flock composed of
her shadow and
her image on water

and, look, her other
shadow on sand
under water, away from
the black-leaf bottom
that's like so many
more swallows

she appears
to arrive at the far
leaf-shadowed end
before she's quite
left this end, revolving,
speeding the water,

her breeze notching
the chop to blue-black
wingtips, hurrying the pond
through its skinny
flume all morning.

—Brendan Galvin

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robbed blind, as he put it, by the salesmen, in whose ranks he had once counted himself.

Barb Kjellerud had brought along a cassette player, and told the class that her hobby was ballroom dancing; she would instruct them in the basic waltz. She pushed the play button on the tape machine, and "Tales From the Vienna Woods" came booming out. To the accompaniment of the music she read her paper, illustrating, as she went, how the steps were to be performed. She danced alone in front of them, doing so with flair. Her blonde hair swayed as she danced, Fenstad noticed. She looked a bit like a contestant in a beauty contest who had too much personality to win. She explained to the men the necessity of leading. Someone had to lead, she said, and tradition had given this responsibility to the male. Fenstad heard his mother snicker.

When Barb Kjellerud asked for volunteers, Fenstad's mother raised her hand. She said she knew how to waltz and would help out. At the front of the class she made a counterclockwise motion with her hand, and for the next minute, sitting at the back of the room, Fenstad watched his mother and one of the sanitation workers waltzing under the flickering fluorescent lights.

"WHAT A WONDERFUL CLASS," FENSTAD'S mother said on the way home. "I hope you're paying attention to what they tell you."

Fenstad nodded. "Tea?" he asked.

She shook her head. "Where're you going after you drop me off?"

"Skating," he said. "I usually go skating. I have a date."

"With the pharmacist? In the dark?"

"We both like it, Ma." As he drove, he made an all-purpose gesture. "The moon and the stars," he said simply.

When he left her off, he felt unsettled. He considered, as a point of courtesy, staying with her a few minutes, but by the time he had this idea he was already away from the building and was headed down the street.

HE AND SUSAN WERE OUT ON THE ICE TOGETHER, skating in large circles, when Susan pointed to a solitary figure sitting on a park bench near the lake's edge. The sky had cleared; the moon gave everything a cold, fine-edged clarity. When Fenstad followed the line of Susan's finger, he saw at once that the figure on the bench was his mother. He realized it simply because of the way she sat there, drawn into herself, attentive even in the winter dark. He skated through the uncleared snow over the ice until he was standing close enough to speak to her. "Mother," he said, "what are you doing here?"

She was bundled up, a thick woolen cap drawn over her head, and two scarves covering much of her face. He could see little other than the two lenses of her glasses facing him in the dark. "I wanted to see you two," she told him. "I thought you'd look happy, and you did. I like to watch happiness. I always have."

"How can you see us? We're so far away."

"That's how I saw you."

This made no sense to him, so he asked, "How'd you get here?"

"I took a cab. That part was easy."

"Aren't you freezing?"

"I don't know. I don't know if I'm freezing or not."

He and Susan took her back to her apartment as soon as they could get their boots on. In the car Mrs. Fenstad insisted on asking Susan what kind of safety procedures were used to ensure that drugs weren't smuggled out of pharmacies and sold illegally, but she didn't appear to listen to the answer, and by the time they reached her building, she seemed to be falling asleep. They helped her up to her apartment. Susan thought that they should give her a warm bath before putting her into bed, and, together, they did. She did not protest. She didn't even seem to notice them as they guided her in and out of the bathtub.

Fenstad feared that his mother would catch some lung infection, and it turned out to be bronchitis, which kept her in her apartment for the first three weeks of February, until her cough went down. Fenstad came by every other day to see how she was, and one Tuesday, after work, he went up to her floor and heard piano music: an old recording, which sounded much played, of the brightest and fastest jazz piano he had ever heard—music of superhuman brilliance. He swung open the door to her apartment and saw York Follette sitting near his mother's bed. On the bedside table was a small tape player, from which the music poured into the room.

Fenstad's mother was leaning back against the pillow, smiling, her eyes closed.

Follette turned toward Fenstad. He had been talking softly. He motioned toward the tape machine and said, "Art Tatum. It's a cut called 'Battery Bounce.' Your mother's never heard it."

"Jazz, Harry," Fenstad's mother said, her eyes still closed, not needing to see her son. "York is explaining to me about Art Tatum and jazz. Next week he's going to try something more progressive on me." Now his mother opened her eyes. "Have you ever heard such music before, Harry?"

They were both looking at him. "No," he said, "I never heard anything like it."

"This is my unique problem, Harry." Fenstad's mother coughed and then waited to recover her breath. "I never heard enough jazz." She smiled. "What glimpses!" she said at last.

After she recovered, he often found her listening to the tape machine that York Follette had given her. She liked to hear the Oscar Peterson Trio as the sun set and the lights of evening came on. She now often mentioned glimpses. Back at home, every night, Fenstad spoke about his mother in his prayers of remembrance and thanksgiving, even though he knew she would disapprove. □

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REDISCOVERING COMPLEXITY

BY BENJAMIN DEMOTT

A handful of American thinkers several decades ago sought to revitalize political liberalism by ridding it of platitudes and cant, and instilling an appreciation of the real world's contrarieties. Over the years this critique of liberalism has been distorted and misinterpreted, and in our own time it has been used—wrongly—to justify the attitudes and policies called to mind by the term "neoconservative." It is time, the author argues, to recover the original ideas.

ON TOWARD THE MIDDLE OF THE TWENTIETH CENtury a resurgence of social, political, and moral thought occurred in this country. Orthodoxies that had formed among the educated classes in the late thirties and early forties underwent revision. American history was reconceived. A foundation was laid for a richer political culture. New models of mind were brought into being—sounder ways of serving intellect and society in the large. It was, in sum, a moment of exceptional intellectual promise.

Fulfilling the promise turned out, not surprisingly, to be a larger order than anticipated. Over the decades threats came both from the ascendancy of the specialist and from the pressure of unprecedented public events. In the sixties, modernism—a set of ideas subversive of political and moral authority—took to the streets; gang warfare subsequently commenced between modernism and counter-ideologies. The warfare is still in progress, to judge from recent major quasi-intellectual disputes (for instance, over Robert Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court and Allan Bloom's *Closing of the American Mind*). Memories of the mid-century moment of promise have faded badly.

Why should one attempt to freshen them now? Partly

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because a visit to the pertinent historical corridor puts us in touch with a valuable—and often badly misinterpreted—body of political thought. Its chief ideas and themes were arrived at independently, by thinkers in separate fields; later, as the principals grew familiar with one another's work, the ideas became mutually animating and reinforcing. At length a successor generation, with a different self-concept, transformed the themes for its own purposes, readying them, as it turned out, for the mind of the eighties, and producing in that process what came to be called neoconservatism. (Several who participated in the transformation are household names for us—Reagan-era fixtures.) At this late date neoconservatism itself—essentially an oversimplification and distortion of the mid-century critique of liberalism—needs no exegesis. But the ideas neoconservatism distorted warrant careful re-examination. Acquaintance with this original body of thought, as it existed in its freshness, could be useful to any would-be architect of future political renewal.

A second reason for retrospection just now is to correct the illusion of autonomy. Even the most casual comparison of relevant texts from the past and present quickens awareness of the messy, unpredictable ways in which, despite the will to independence and an enthusiasm for the "tradition of the new," we continue to live life backward and forward in time, and can never win full release from the hand of the past. No formal history, armored with methodology and documentation, is required to show us this. A nudge of memory suffices, a glance over the shoulder at a yesterday that's still as close at hand as the bookshelves in more than a few middle-class American homes.

The Sound of the Elders: Double Truths

THE THINKERS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE AMERICAN RE-surgence of thought were remarkable for *general* intelligence—the capacity to construct order out of confusion not for the purpose of self-dazzlement but to help the community as a whole think and feel its way forward to clearer social vision. Uncommonly alert to the reductive practices and habits of mind which then, as now, ossified factions, they fashioned an exceptionally useful standard for the evaluation of social and political discourse. The most important reason for returning to them is to recover that standard for effective, immediate use.

The debate in which the standard was shaped centered on three issues:

The efficacy of "purposive social action" undertaken with an eye to solving local, national, or global problems.

The adequacy of historical models presenting the American past—from the age of Jackson through the New Deal and later—as a series of battles pitting the purity of the folk, the little people, against the selfishness of the interests (big business).

Whether intense adherence to absolutes—ideals of progress, humanitarianism, and justice—facilitates or hinders the development of sound moral imagination.

The shapers of the standard—Robert Merton, Richard Hofstadter, and Lionel Trilling (a sociologist, a historian, and a *littérateur*)—were well known to one another; occupied the same base, Columbia University; attained commanding reputations in their respective professions at early ages; and shared an unexpressed yet momentous goal: emancipating American liberalism from naiveté.

About the closeness of the relationships of these three to one another, as thinkers, there is no doubt, and the interactions of their thought are absorbing. In the 1940s and 1950s, employing different methods and tools, investigating different materials (historical movements, novels and poems, social structure), Hofstadter, Trilling, and Merton separately published critiques of simplistic liberal moralism as that phenomenon engaged their academically specialized eyes. Hofstadter, bent on overturning idealized versions of the Populist Crusade, claimed that liberal intellectuals "suffer from a sense of isolation which they usually seek to surmount by finding ways of getting into rapport with the people, and they readily succumb to a tendency to sentimentalize the folk." Trilling, building a case for the living novelist he admired most (E. M. Forster), located that novelist's distinction in his witty brief against the "liberal mind"—the mind that believes "the order of human affairs owes it a simple logic: good is good and bad is bad"; the mind that understands "the moods of optimism and pessimism" but can neither name nor understand "the mood that is the response to good-and-evil." Merton, for his part, supplied a theoretical analysis of social structure which cast light on the "latent," as opposed to "manifest," functions of institutions, and upon unintended, as opposed to intended, consequences of social action; in *Social Theory and Social Structure* (1949) he effectively undermined simplistic liberal versions of such institutions as the "corrupt" urban political machine.

All three writers were selectively influenced by Marx. Although increasingly heedful of Marxism's anti-individualist strain and of the inapplicability of Marxian economic concepts to advanced industrial nations, they could not delete from consciousness the convictions and attitudes that had drawn them to Marx in the first place. Their writing is bare of signs of impassivity in the face either of the suffering of the underclass or of destructive uses of the social wealth of the West. They were capable of anger at unintelligent, self-deceiving caring—"concern" that lacked vitality because encrusted in reality-obscuring cliché and piety. They held that a liberalism lacking in critical self-consciousness, unwilling to confront the toughness of its moral and social task, would in time be helpless to beat back totalitarian threats. And since, as Trilling pointed out in 1950, there was no chance that help could come from American conservatism (that tradition was intellectually dead), he and the others would have to try to supply the criticism themselves, from within.

But obviously it could not be destructive criticism—would of necessity fight hard against the righteous rage

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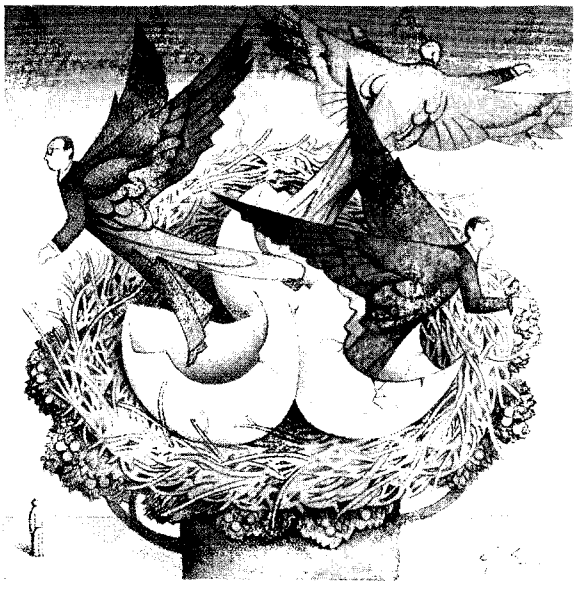
that leads some correctors of faults to demolish the structures they set out to repair. Functioning as a critic-from-within of liberalism would mean turning an unsparing light on weaknesses without gutting either one's own best self or the best selves of like minds. The talents required would include both self-restraint and adeptness at the handling of double truths.

THOSE GIFTS ARE WELL ILLUSTRATED IN THE PERson of Stephen Elwin, the hero of "The Other Margaret," a short story by Trilling that appeared in *Partisan Review* in 1945. Among the earliest attempts by a reflective critic of liberalism to use his urban experience as a means of revealing the contrarieties of liberal faith, the story follows Elwin, a publisher, through a routine urban day in which he and his wife encounter misbehavior on the part of several representatives of the underclass. The encounters direct the hero's inner reflections and prepare him for the story's crisis, which is brought on by the misbehavior of the Elwin family's new black maid, the other Margaret of the title. (Elwin's daughter, a teenaged schoolgirl, is also named Margaret.)



The approach to the crisis begins before dinner, when Elwin's wife, patience gone, tells her husband and daughter that the new maid is a "nasty, mean person." The daughter objects, having learned at her progressive school that Negro domestic servants are exploited by families like her own. When she proceeds to argue, further, that the poor can't be held responsible for their acts, Elwin—to his own moderate surprise—interrupts. "Why not?" he asks, and his daughter explains, "Society didn't give her a chance. . . . She has a handicap. Because she's colored. She has to struggle so hard—against prejudice. It's so *hard* for her."

Cautiously, non-rhetorically, Elwin draws young Margaret's attention to family experiences—happy experiences—with an earlier black maid, proposing that handicaps are borne differently by different people and that moral behavior depends heavily on the individual human being's self-conception. The earlier black maid had had to borrow money from the Elwins and was still repaying it. Elwin's daughter insists that "she can't afford it"; Elwin, agreeing, adds that "she can't afford not to," either, because "she needs to think of herself . . . as a responsible person."

Comes an eruption, a few moments later: Margaret the new maid gives notice abruptly to her employers, and then smashes, seemingly by intention, a bit of pottery that Margaret the daughter had made for her mother as a birthday present. This event, together with Elwin's previous criticism of the talk of "prejudice" and "handicaps," begins young Margaret's advance from cant.

Much commented on at the time of its publication, "The Other Margaret" is Forsterian in aspiration, a shade solemn in execution, and (for us) outdated in idiom; it is not a masterwork of fiction. It is, however, a suggestive portrait of the liberal wrestling with himself. Like much of Trilling's best literary criticism, it shows us a mind determined not to dodge the difficulties inherent in any autarchic concept of either societal or personal responsibility. Frustrated by those difficulties, Elwin has been sorting them out for himself, and takes no satisfaction in his effort to do the same for his daughter. (Satisfaction isn't the hallmark of "the mood that is the response to good-and-evil.") When, toward the end, he declares himself, his tone is rueful:

> Had he been truly the wise man he wanted to be, he would have been able to explain, to Margaret and himself, the nature of the double truth. As much as Margaret, he believed that "society is responsible." He believed the other truth too [the truth of personal responsibility].

But it is a declaration, and it is commensurate with the events of Elwin's day. Those events—ranging from a patch of Jew-baiting witnessed by his wife to a bus conductor's harshness to a child—bring pointed reminders that individual failures to achieve standards of personal responsibility are in part a function of lack of advantage (the "gentle rearing and the good education that made a man like Stephen Elwin answerable for all his actions"). The same events confirm that mean deeds are committed by whites and blacks alike and demand to be considered in the light of the circumstances generating the need for acts of resistance and rebellion; the circumstance that counts most is that low-income blacks are, in the main, bullied and powerless. As "The Other Margaret" closes in on the conduct of one member of that class—and upon one kind of liberal platitude—none of these reminders is forgotten. And as a result the unflamboyant assertion of belief in a "double truth" has strength and weight.

AN EXACTLY PARALLEL EFFORT—AN EFFORT TO SUBject cant to cold-eyed scrutiny without obstructing potential moral progress—animates Hofstadter's and Merton's writing. And the authorial personas of both scholars constitute models of liberal thoughtfulness com-

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parable to that which Trilling created in Stephen Elwin.

The moral oversimplification that troubled Hofstadter arose, as noted, in contemporary idealizations of populism and progressivism as crusades, by the little people, to "bring back a kind of morality and civic purity that was . . . believed to have been lost." Be realistic, Hofstadter counseled himself and others in *The Age of Reform* (1955). The evidence reveals that populists were often parochial and sometimes anti-Semitic. Then, as ever, heartland innocence had a kinky streak. ("The commercial farmer was beginning to cast off habits of thought and action created almost as much by the persistence of the agrarian myth as by the realities of his position.") Writers and thinkers who signed on with progressivism, from above, were given to fantasy about the interest of "the masses of people" in "logic and principle." The moral status of populism and progressivism, like that of other popular reform movements, was "ambiguous," and fools alone found them credible as crusades.

And yet the movements do not warrant scorn or dismissal. "Humanitarianism, courage, and vision" figured in them from beginning to end. What's more, "within the limited framework of the reforms that were possible without structural alterations in the American social and economic system, the muckrakers did accomplish something. . . ." If we're to avoid replacing mere lamebrained puffery with mere bombshell exposé, we need to work our way in closer to the reformist psyche, tracing contrarieties of character, spelling out the etiology of behavior. One reason for the reformers' excessive revulsion at trusts, bosses, and other evils was that "the religious institutions of Protestantism provided no mechanism to process, drain off, and externalize the sense of guilt." Another was that "American political traditions provided no strong native tradition of conservatism to reconcile men to evils that could not easily be disposed of." Evangelical Protestantism induced a conception of responsibility according to which "everyone was in some very serious sense responsible for everything," and self-deception entered because the typical person in whom the sense of guilt and shame was quickened had no intention of making "any basic changes in a society in which he was so typically a prosperous and respectable figure."

As the historian shifted focus to character and character formation, he stepped forth as a writer aiming at sustained responsiveness to a multi-leveled moral reality. Advising against idolatry of characters who are "ready to be convinced that the country [is] thoroughly wicked" but aren't prepared to make personal sacrifices to correct the situation, he nevertheless stood firm for the notion that such idolatry isn't totally invalidating or crippling. The reformist sensibility did not know itself and certainly deserved chiding for its flaws; but it also commanded respect as a humanizing, broadening, and healing force whose shame was sometimes honest and whose influence saved America from becoming "nothing but a jungle." Our goal, as readers of our past, should be not to exchange sentimentality for indifference but rather to press ourselves for comprehension of the double truths within our own moral natures.

IT WAS PARTLY FROM ROBERT MERTON'S *SOCIAL THEORY and Social Structure* that Hofstadter learned how to write about corruption-obsessed reformers from a viewpoint not of superiority to public-spirited concern but of anxiety about the moral dimness that can accompany—and disable—that concern. (Merton had brought off this feat in his treatment of the latent functions of political machines.) But Merton's unique contribution flowed from his probing of two other liberal faults: overhasty disillusionment with the masses of people and overconfident belief in miracles by planning.

Two chapters of *Social Theory* and a famous paper titled "The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action" dealt with the nature of the obstacles besetting planners and with the reasons for rejecting generalized despair about planning. ("Unanticipated Consequences" was written in 1936, when huge optimism about planning was giving way to huge pessimism.) Merton's functional analysis uncovered a world layered in ironies: good producing evil, evil producing good, a variety of evidence testifying that benign intention, in emergencies or otherwise, never ensures favorable results. Among the factors handicapping attempts to predict and control the future was the tendency of predictions themselves to affect outcomes. Yet, Merton argued, "widespread, even typical, failures in planning . . . [cannot] be cited as evidence for pessimism"; "it is the successful experiment which is decisive and not the thousand-and-one failures which preceded it. More is learned from the single success than from the multiple failures. . . . " One example of recent success was an interracial housing experiment in Pittsburgh—Merton and a fellow researcher had been following it for several years—in which amity seemed to be replacing fear of conflict. But in describing the project the sociologist cautioned explicitly against beamishness. Success does not come quickly and can't be achieved by moral hectoring. Changes must be wrought patiently, within the institutional fabric.

And resiliency has to be endless. That quality appeared to be running out among liberals in the late thirties and early forties; one sign of this was the earnest attention then being paid to academicians and others who had begun arraigning the Depression-battered underclass, on pseudo-biological grounds, for weakness, lack of self-control, and collapse into deviant or criminal behavior. (A typical arraignment was E. W. Bakke's *The Unemployed Worker*, which appeared in 1940). In the manner of Trilling confronting defects in the underclass, Merton rehearsed the varieties of meanness, failure, and worse targeted by these voices of disillusionment. He acknowledged that clinical case histories often establish that episodes of underclass defiance—"dramatic kinds of illicit adaptation"—are "linked with patterns of discipline and socialization in the

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family." But then, in the manner of Hofstadter moving sympathetically inside the grievances of farmers and analyzing their systemic roots, Merton explained why it was a mistake to link deviancy solely with individual failure to control "imperious biological drives." His explanation ranks to this day as the classic account of anomie in the American context.

It began with an analysis of the uniqueness of that context. Here was a culture teaching that everyone should "strive for the same lofty goals," that "seeming failure is but a way-station to ultimate success," and that "genuine failure consists only in the lessening or withdrawal of ambition." Yet, Merton said, the same culture "restricts or completely closes access to approved modes of reaching these goals," to people at the bottom. Those shut off often know nothing about the "structural sources" of their plight. They've been teased away, many of them, from the solidarities that might ease their pain, been instructed to "identify themselves, not with their compeers, but with those at the top. . . . " They can see no substance in—no reasonable place in their daily lives for—virtues and habits considered by others to warrant thoroughgoing respect. Given these realities, what kind of expectations of the poor or of low-income minorities are realistic? And does it make sense to posit biological causes for deviancy? "When poverty and associated disadvantages . . . are linked with a cultural emphasis on pecuniary success as a dominant goal, high rates of criminal behavior are the normal outcome."

Neither here nor elsewhere in Merton's work is the principle of personal accountability denied, or a hint offered that crime ceases to be criminal if committed by somebody on the bottom rung. And there is no tolerance of evasion or euphemism. Deviancy swarms in its variousness, bearing plain labels, in his pages: "psychotics, autists, pariahs, outcasts, vagrants, vagabonds, tramps, chronic drunkards and drug addicts." But the writer drives himself against the overpersonalization of behavior. His book anatomizes disillusionment with the masses in a way that clarifies why the disillusionment itself is a species of blindness to the workings of "the social and economic system." There are blunt words for the racism lurking in so-called biological accountings of the underclass ("the anti-Negro charges which are not patently false are only speciously true"). Well before the end *Social Theory* gives substantial reality to the figure of the critic-from-within whose liberal faith is supple and muscular, schooled by harsh realities and disappointing failures, and yet unshaken.

To repeat, each of the Columbia luminaries had a firm sense of the possibilities of this faith. All three clearly believed that exposing strains and contradictions in fundamental values—sympathy, generosity, hope—not only serves truth but ultimately strengthens the values. Often acerb, seldom suffering fools gladly, they nevertheless would not descend, when engaged in dissecting liberal fatuity, into mockery of the feelings of compassion, within themselves and others, that ennoble great struggles against injustice. Their social tone was humane.

The Next Generation: An End to Ambiguity

THE TONE DOES NOT SURVIVE AMONG THE ELDERS' successors, and its deterioration was evident years before the late sixties and the seventies—the seed time of contemporary conservatism. The works in which Merton, Hofstadter, and Trilling had brilliantly demonstrated the use of that tone were all in print by 1955. Within a decade their versions both of the underclass and of liberal faith had been sharply revised by the younger writers who had begun intellectual life as their disciples. And the process has continued into our own decade, wherein politically influential works of theory regularly invoke the names and language of the first critics-from-within while espousing positions the elders could not approve. Books and authors by the score, hundreds of issues of weekly, monthly, and quarterly journals of opinion, have played a role in the transformation. And this chapter of the history of ideas has been written in a period of social upheaval every phase of which has had as much impact on thinkers and writers as the Depression and the Cold War had upon Merton, Hofstadter, and Trilling.

One key text, Norman Podhoretz's "My Negro Problem—and Ours," appeared in 1963. The then-young editor of *Commentary* had been Trilling's student at Columbia, and he emulated his teacher in "My Negro Problem" by drawing on his own urban experience in a critique of liberalism. But there were differences. (Podhoretz had an increasingly embattled relationship with his mentor in Trilling's later years.) Dispensing with the distancing, softening screen of fiction that locates imagined problems in imagined worlds, Podhoretz wrote his piece as an autobiographical essay set in a cityscape of hard facts. It opened with a description of the author's puzzlement when, as he was growing up in Brooklyn, in the 1930s, he saw in print the claim that "all Negroes were persecuted." The puzzlement arose from his experience of being "repeatedly beaten up, robbed, and in general hated, terrorized, and humiliated" by blacks. They "were supposed to be persecuted [but] it was the Negroes who were doing the only persecuting I knew about—and doing it, moreover, to *me*. . . . What could it mean . . . to say that they were badly off and that we were more fortunate?"

The center of "My Negro Problem—and Ours" consists of several pages of incidents of violent real-life bullying by blacks. Podhoretz remembers himself one day angering a "surly Negro boy" named Quentin—who had "a very dark, very cruel, very Oriental-looking face"—by answering in class a question the Negro boy had failed to answer. Later that day Quentin and his little brother, "who is carrying a baseball bat and wearing a grin of malicious anticipation," come after Podhoretz, "in front of my own house," and the bat, wielded by Quentin, "crashes colored lights into my head."

> The next thing I know, my mother and sister are standing over me, both of them hysterical. My sister—she

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who was later to join the "progressive" youth organization—is shouting for the police and screaming imprecations at those dirty little black bastards. They take me upstairs, the doctor comes, the police come. I tell them that the boy who did it was a stranger, that he had been trying to get money from me. They do not believe me, but I am too scared to give them Quentin's name.

After several similar accounts of murderous violence, Podhoretz asserts that he still feels hatred for blacks, that he believes most white Americans are "for whatever reason, it no longer matters . . . twisted and sick in our feelings about Negroes," and that he despairs of "the present push toward integration." He acknowledges that his feelings of hatred must be overcome, alluding to "that clichéd proposition of liberal thought," namely that "it is *wrong* for a man to suffer because of the color of his skin." And in his closing sentence he imagines himself one day having strength enough to give his daughter "my blessing" if she wants to marry a Negro.

In "My Negro Problem" the underclass is powerful—not, as in "The Other Margaret," simultaneously powerless and capable of making enraging gestures of rebellion. The situation of the underclass vis-à-vis that of the rest of the population becomes enviable (Negroes are "the very embodiment of the values of the street—free, independent, reckless, brave, masculine, erotic . . . not giving a damn for anyone or anything"). The underclass is evoked as all of a piece, not made up of individuals of various colors, variously capable of maintaining standards of personal responsibility, but almost uniformly violent, persecutory, and black. And liberal faith is no longer cliché-ridden *and* morally energizing; it is purely hypocritical. "Everywhere we look today in the North, we find the curious phenomenon of white middle-class liberals with no previous personal experience of Negroes . . . discovering that their abstract commitment to the cause of Negro rights will not stand the test of a direct confrontation," and "fleeing in droves to the suburbs."

Over the years the themes would become increasingly familiar: liberal concern for the underclass is in excess of the value of the members of the class (exaggerates both the worth of the people and the seriousness of their wound), and liberalism itself is a dogmatic faith ("abstract," inelastic, terrified of fact). But the themes count for less, probably, than the writer's own self-concept. It's a self-concept in which reflectiveness is imagined as a process of shucking off. The elder put himself forward as someone aware that without wisdom, judgments of others are empty, and that wisdom, because modest, seldom recognizes itself; his approach to wisdom led through complexity, elaboration, qualification, irony, and self-doubt. The successor, harder-nosed, envisages himself as a specialist in unadorned shocking fact that tells its own story plain. His name for double truth is tedium.

STANLEY ELKINS, AN ACADEMIC HISTORIAN AND THE author of *Slavery* (1959), spoke in a gentler voice than Podhoretz's, and on matters more distant, but delivered a yet more jolting message: moral outrage at slavery in nineteenth-century America was groundless. Like Podhoretz, Elkins began with a perspective framed in its basics by the critique of liberalism from within. The crucial text for him was Hofstadter's *The Age of Reform* (Hofstadter had been Elkins's teacher at Columbia). *Slavery*, a sensation when it appeared and the work with which every scholar in the field still must cope, developed an argument in which mid-nineteenth-century and earlier enemies of slavery corresponded to the enemies of trusts and bosses in Hofstadter's study of progressivism. The book echoed Hofstadter in tracing the moral extremism of the reformist sensibility to Protestant guilt. But to his reformers Hofstadter had granted courage and a measure of effectiveness; he also treated the problems and conditions they protested as worthy of public outrage. Elkins was stonier. He represented the abolitionists as "morally implacable" prigs, nowhere acknowledged that they were effective (were unquestionably responsible, that is, for emancipation), and raised doubt about the seriousness of the problem they were addressing.

It was the doubt about slavery as evil that made *Slavery* a cultural incident. Elkins claimed that it was wrongheaded to reject, automatically, the stereotype of the full-grown Negro slave in America as less than human, as a lazy, lying, silly, dependent child—a Sambo. Historians should seek a "way of dealing with the Sambo picture, some formula for taking it seriously." The formula at which Elkins arrived found the Sambo picture to have been essentially correct. The slavery system had infantilized Negroes; hence the Sambo picture was no insulting myth but a fair likeness of the reality. The conclusion that followed—a shaky conclusion—was that the abolitionists who whipped themselves into frenzy about the crushed humanity of the slaves were caught in fantasy, victims of abstract moral absolutism and mindless anti-institutionalism.

Had they been sensible, the abolitionists would have been quieter and more understanding of slavery as an in-

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stitution. They would have adopted a gradualist strategy, respecting the rights and sensibilities of slaveholders, and treating slavery as less appalling than their ferocious damnation-dealing had made it out to be. Sambo was Sambo, was he not? How could he have known what was happening to him? The intellectual should have sought "a relationship to the humane slaveholder which need not inevitably have been one of 'friendly sympathy' but would certainly have had to be one of responsibility, of sensitivity to his requirements." A possible model might have been "the hard-bitten Englishman Wilberforce, who, for all his merciless campaigning for emancipation, could still be appalled at a premature proposal in the House of Commons to do away with the whip as the badge of authority in the West Indies."

The subjects of Elkins's *Slavery* and Podhoretz's "My Negro Problem" stand worlds apart, but the relation of these works to the earlier minds that made them possible is the same. In each instance the younger writer sheds the elder's concern for elements of contrariety and ambiguity in reformist or liberal sympathy. He signals that the response of outrage to injustice ("merciless" campaigning for emancipation, "premature" doing away with whippings) is inappropriate. He indicts as abstract and destructive the feelings of shame at the condition of the underclass which the elder would not criticize without first honoring as essentially humane. He disallows the claims of the underclass to the status of an oppressed group, edges toward mockery of humanitarianism, and reads double truths out of the record. Yet he continues to behave as though assured of the continuity between his own project of self-simplification and the elder's struggle for a self commensurate with complexity.

The Present Age: Controlled Contempt

AT NO TIME IN THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES WAS THE generation of critics-from-within forgotten, but memories of what it stood for grew steadily fainter. By the late sixties it seemed almost as though sociologists and others who cited Merton in their work had no realization whatever of his attitude toward so-called biological denunciations of the underclass. In *The Unheavenly City* (1970) Edward C. Banfield, a professor of government at Harvard University and the head of President Nixon's task force on model cities, presented himself as "a social scientist [thinking] about the problems of the cities in the light of scholarly findings" ("facts are facts, however unpleasant"). His thesis was that American cities are disaster areas because the underclass isn't normal—it is pathologically sick.

> The lower-class individual lives from moment to moment. . . . Impulse governs his behavior, either because he cannot discipline himself to sacrifice a present for a future satisfaction or because he has no sense of the future. He is therefore radically improvident: whatever he cannot consume immediately he considers valueless. His bodily needs (especially for sex) and his taste for "action" take precedence over everything else—and certainly over any work routine. He works only as he must to stay alive, and drifts from one unskilled job to another, taking no interest in the work.

Throughout *The Unheavenly City* Professor Banfield used the term *normal*, as he said, "to refer to class culture that is not lower class." The implication—namely, that the lower class is pathological—was "fully warranted both because of the relatively high incidence of mental illness in the lower class and also because human nature seems loath to accept a style of life that is so radically present-oriented."

The notion of societal responsibility has no place in this study; no mention is made of the factors that Merton found relevant to deviancy, rebellion, breakout. Yet both Merton and Trilling are quoted in the work—Trilling, who insisted that personal and societal responsibilities intersect; Merton, who found anti-Negro charges patently false or speciously true. At a pivotal point in Banfield's argument Merton's concept of self-fulfilling prophecy is misused to justify the claim that it is socially harmful to blame black protest on the "environment." Such explanations "are bound to be taken as justifications, or at any rate extenuations, of [the] behavior and therefore tend to reinforce the irresponsibility that is characteristic of the age and class culture. . . . " A new theme enters, soon to become commonplace: allusions to double truth incite to violence.

A GOOD EXAMPLE OF SIMILAR THINNING-OUT IN OUR own immediate period is found in a widely cited volume by Charles Murray. In *Losing Ground* (1984) Murray studied thirty years of federal welfare programs. Each of the reductive themes first sounded in the Podhoretz-Elkins generation of the late fifties and early sixties has a prominent place in the book. Murray's analysis of those who cried *mea culpa* about poverty in the 1960s strikes the note of controlled contempt heard in Elkins's dismissal of those who cried *mea culpa* about slavery. White anti-poverty activists are accused of "moral agonizing" and "guilt." Quotation marks sneer at "the simple, purely 'good' civil rights movement against the nasty southerners." Concern for the poor is defined as irrational and obsessive: "White confusion and guilt . . . created what Moynihan has called 'a near-obsessive concern to locate the "blame" for poverty, especially Negro poverty, on forces and institutions outside the community concerned.' "

More than three decades separate *Losing Ground* from Merton's *Social Theory* (the only classic of sociology Charles Murray cites), but the rhetoric of the book is distinctly Mertonian. The author lays down three laws of social programs; each is couched in the language of paradox and irony that Merton taught to a generation of sociologists. The second law is termed "The Law of Unintended Rewards." It specifies that "any social transfer [through welfare programs] increases the net value of being in the

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condition that prompted the transfer." Murray's language directly echoes that of Merton's discussion of "unanticipated" and "unintended" consequences of "purposive social action." But Merton's substance—his certainty that pessimism about planning should not be allowed to predominate—has disappeared. All welfare programs fail, Murray says; hence he proposes "scrapping the entire federal welfare and income-support structure for working-aged persons, including AFDC, Medicaid, Food Stamps, Unemployment Insurance, Worker's Compensation, subsidized housing, disability insurance, and the rest." The scrapped programs would be replaced . . . by nothing.

The Right Conduct of Mind

THE CRITIQUE OF LIBERALISM INTENSIFIED WITH the coming of disillusionment about the ill-considered crash programs of LBJ's Great Society, and with the onset of revulsion at the years of protest. But it bears repeating that the refashioning of the critique had begun a decade earlier. Oedipal influence could have been at work; sons on these shores have a culturally prescribed duty to overreach fathers. Hofstadter, Trilling, and Merton were under that imperative as they confronted *their* elders—whether Marx and Freud or Beard and Parrington—yet their desire to challenge did not become a need to destroy. Arguably, in American intellectual life the risk that the pursuit of identity will become inseparable from the pursuit of extravagance varies according to the size of the gifts of the competing generations.

Not surprisingly, one aspect of the processes sketched above involved the fabrication, over the years, of a kind of substitute identity for the critics-from-within: mythic versions of their careers. Hofstadter, for example, was reconceived as a kind of muckraker. No matter that he asserted both that populism contained paranoid elements and that it was a healing force; by convention the latter point came to be deleted. Merton, who fought affirmatively for the yoking of conscience and competence, was revised into a voice of impotence and gloom. Trilling's fate was still worse: he was made out to have been a convert. His lifelong commitment to greater social liberality was disremembered, as was his often repeated condemnation of social niggardliness. In their place stood a myth of rebirth. The revolutionary of the early thirties was held to have seen his error and reversed course abruptly in the sixties, taking for his mission the defusing of radical passions.

A valuable legacy of political thought has been troublingly misused, and everywhere in contemporary political life the direct and indirect results of that misuse are visible. The Chief Executive assumes a stance of doubt—of instant incredulity—when told early in the eighties of inequity. He observes that the Sunday newspaper lists thousands of jobs for which there are no takers, and that some homeless people are sleeping on grates "by choice." Edwin Meese insists that "some people are going to soup kitchens voluntarily . . . because the food is free and that's easier than paying for it." These seemingly rote gestures have cultural roots in a period a quarter century ago, when concern about slavery itself was dismissed as excessive. Or again: the voice of political sophistication among us intimates that the sense of shame or of pity for the miserable and the unlucky reflects an absurd "passion of compassion" (as *The Public Interest* has characterized it)—soft, emotional, Rousseauistic. And this, too, is rooted in yesterday—in the period when the underclass was discovered to be composed exclusively of carefree persecutors undeserving of pity. Under the influence of that past we accept condescension to—even the taunting of—our best selves as a mark of discernment and wit.

THE WORK TO BE DONE NOW IS, AS I SAID AT THE start, essentially that of recovering the standard of discourse capable of breaking those habits of condescension. Guided by the standard in question, we can begin to search out respectable living arrangements for shared yet competing values, developing in the process broad philosophical agreements about proper government roles, keeping the contrarieties alive within us throughout the negotiations. The key to the undertaking does not lie in the contrivance of neoliberalisms to match (and cancel) neoconservatisms, or in efforts to refurbish the reading lists of yesteryear. It lies, instead, in scrupulosity about intellectual methods—in the recovery of feeling for what Lionel Trilling called "the right conduct of mind."

In the great Jefferson Lecture he delivered in Washington in 1972, three years before he died, Trilling pressed the point that the way a nation thinks determines in the end the quality of its governance. We've come, he said, to "judge societies and their governments by the same criteria we use in estimating the rightness of the conduct of mind," and we're correct to do so; we can find "the paradigm of a just society in the right conduct of mind." Nor are the fundamental principles of this right conduct obscure or mysterious. We locate them in the very act of trusting the energy of mind—trusting the mind's "intentionality, its impulse toward inclusiveness and completeness, its search for coherence with due regard for the integrity of the elements which it brings into relation with each other, its power of looking before and after."

From this sense of mind—this love of the mind's disciplines and ambitions, its variousness and flexibility—grew the standard of discourse that was responsible for the country's last memorable moment of broadly based intellectual promise. In the voice of the elders—*in their tone*—two truths resound that deserve to live on a little longer, and our task is to find a language that will ensure their survival. One truth is that nothing can be done to ease injustice or oppression except with the aid of the flexible intelligence, the mobile imagination, and the will to self-sacrifice. The other truth, simpler and deeper and inexpressibly precious, is that honest shame is not to be mocked. □

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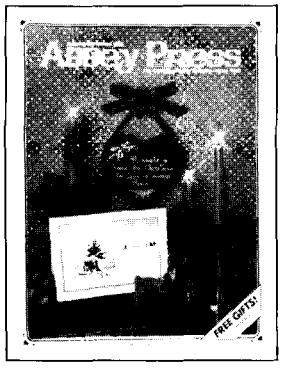

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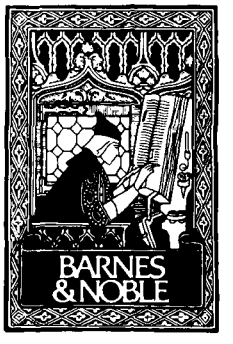

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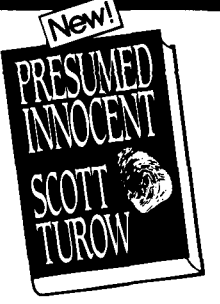

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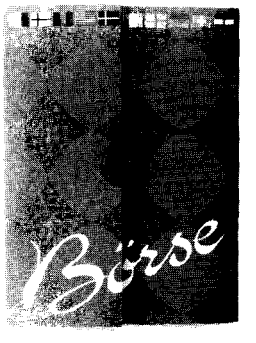

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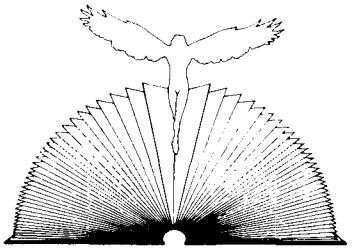

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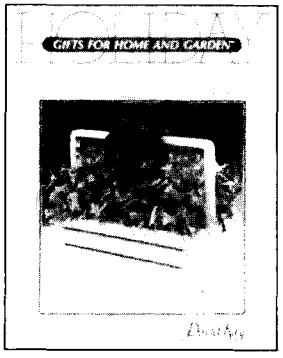

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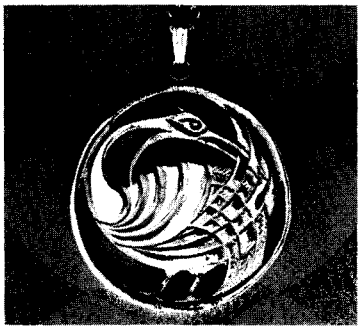

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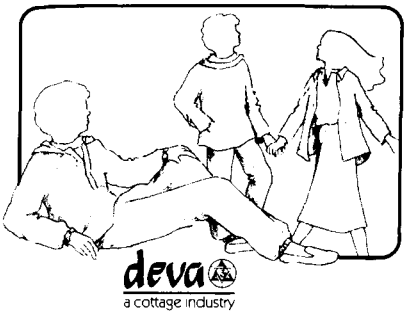

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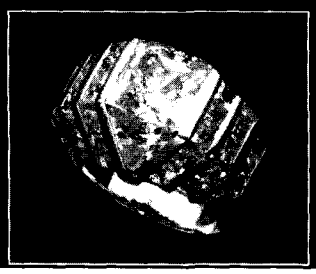

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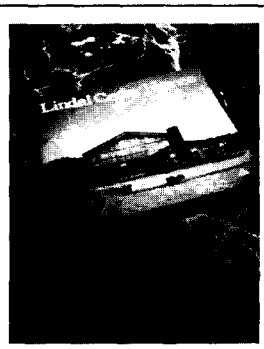

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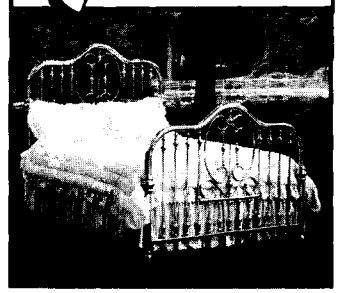

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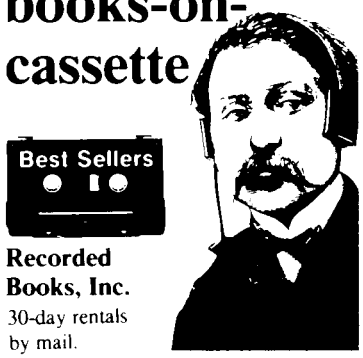

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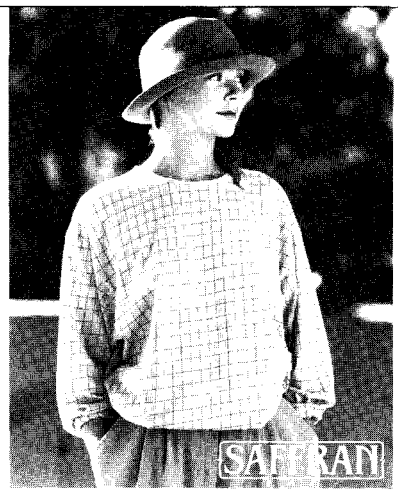

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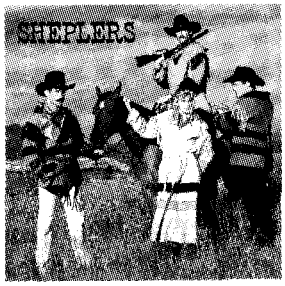

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TRAVEL

BONS VOYAGES

Sailing through paradise, or French Polynesia

BY BARBARA WALLRAFF

"IT ISN'T ORIGINAL, is it?" Michael, a wry young Swede with whom I fell into conversation on the island of Huahine, remarked about French Polynesia as a destination. Of course it's not original. How could it be? French Polynesia is everyone's dream of paradise come true.

Administratively it is an overseas territory of France. Geographically it is a collection of many hundreds of islands in the South Pacific. Most of these are tiny coral atolls, or motu, like the settings for desert-island cartoons. But French Polynesia also includes a number of majestic volcanic outpourings. Huahine is one example; better-known ones are Tahiti, Moorea, and Bora Bora. These four islands and two more, Raiatea and Tahaa, are noteworthy because two very different cruise ships now visit them all every week.

Tahiti, the site of Papeete, French Polynesia's only city, has been relentlessly denigrated by visitors seeking paradise even as more and more French Polynesians have moved there seeking economic opportunity. Some two thirds of the territory's 175,000 inhabitants now live on the island. Still, its north and east coasts remain all but undeveloped. One segment is strung with black-sand beaches, like native black pearls on a necklace, and much of the coast road presents impressive vistas of French Polynesia's highest peaks, Orohena and Aorai, in the center of the island.

People who like to rank things rank Moorea and Bora Bora among the most beautiful islands in the world. Moorea, its mountains often capped by clouds, is visible from Papeete—and to well-off Papeete residents, it's the Hamptons. But the island is best appreciated from the middle of Cook's Bay, off the side of Moorea farthest from Tahiti. From here Moorea's skyline appears so jagged and primitive that it might have been drawn by a feverishly imaginative child.

Huahine, nearer to Bora Bora, is among the least developed of the major islands, with a population of 4,000 and only a handful of tourist hotels. It fascinates both archaeologists, who have made a number of finds significant to Polynesian prehistory here, and surfers, whose significant find is the Huahine Pipeline—one perfect wave after another rolling rhythmically along the reef.

Raiatea and Tahaa, nearer still to Bora Bora, are sister islands across a channel narrow enough to swim. Tahaa is the smaller and quieter of the two. Raiatea is the site of both Uturoa, which with a population of 5,000 is French Polynesia's second largest community, and the Faaroa River, the only navigable river in French Polynesia. The Faaroa is a Disney Jungle World river, mysterious but unthreatening. French Polynesia has no crocodiles, no snakes—in fact, surprisingly little animal life of any kind. Eerily, it was children that I saw peeping out of the underbrush along the dark riverbanks; these are their back yards. When I came back down the river, in the rain, the children were in the water, splashing about.

On Bora Bora the overwhelming presence is Otemanu, a godlike volcanic peak with an almost rectangular silhouette. Within the island's lagoon is a coral garden that is one of the most delightful snorkeling spots I've seen anywhere. Near the garden is a place where local entrepreneurs bring tourists to partake of the ritual of shark-feeding. The locals stand in the water and dole out fish skins and carcasses to the all but harmless reef sharks that show up. The tourists grip a rope strung in the water eight or ten feet away and watch in baseless terror through snorkeling masks. I can't help feeling that these same people would be incensed if, say, American entrepreneurs got Yellowstone's bears (which really are dangerous) hooked on handouts.

It would be hard to choose among these six islands if you could visit only one or two. Happily, you needn't choose. Because they are at most a night's sail apart, French Polynesia is ideal for a one-week cruise itinerary. In October of 1986 Exploration Cruise Lines' eighty-six-passenger *Majestic Explorer* began visiting the six islands year-round. These days, among Exploration's eight ships it is the one booked closest to capacity. In August of last year the 148-passenger *Wind Song*, a stunning sailing

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Cook's Bay and the island of Moorea

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A motu in the waters off Bora Bora

vessel built for Windstar Sail Cruises, began to make one-week cruises to the six islands, also year-round. And this winter the new 360-passenger *Sea Venture*, the first ship built for Sea Venture Cruises, will begin cruising French Polynesia, also visiting the six islands on a one-week itinerary, until April, when it will steam off to Alaska for the summer. Alas, French Polynesia's best, driest weather is from May to October.

Unable to choose, I sailed on both the *Majestic Explorer* and the *Wind Song* earlier this year.

IF THERE EXISTS anywhere a passenger vessel friendlier and less pretentious than the *Majestic Explorer*, it is a rubber raft shooting whitewater. The ship in fact carries three motorized rubber boats, on which some excursions to shore are made. Others are accomplished by means of the ship's most unusual feature: a "bow-landing" ramp, which can be extended from the fore of the upper deck. In combination with the ship's shallow draft (seven feet), the ramp permits passengers to step off the ship directly onto some beaches.

As near as I could tell, the magical spirit aboard the *Majestic Explorer* was achieved by leaving us passengers with nothing to worry about and no time to worry about it, and providing us with amenities and comforts at a level that kept us in mind of adventure rather than high life.

The passengers' activities are exceptionally well thought out. For example, after a Tahitian-style picnic on a motu, when we were ready to climb up the bow-landing ramp and get back on board, we found a deckhand stationed at the base of the ramp with a hose to rinse the sand off our feet. The staff makes a point of announcing to all passengers where they can get money changed (the local currency is Communauté Française de Pacifique francs, or CFPs) on shore, and where the good snorkeling and promising shops and comfortable bars are.

On a typical day an informative talk about the island of the day begins at 7:00, at the fore of the upper deck, over coffee, while the ship is first cruising past the island in question. Breakfast is at 7:30. Between 8:15 and 6:00 P.M. the schedule varies, but it can be counted on to include two or three shore excursions: to motus for shelling and snorkeling, to villages for shopping, to hotels for sailing or windsurfing or having lunch and sitting around the bar or swimming (the ship has no pool of its own). Few of the excursions entail an extra charge, which is unusual on a cruise. Then, at 6:00 P.M., typically the ship up-anchors and goes for a cocktail-hour cruise, often with a troupe of Tahitian singers and dancers aboard to provide entertainment. Dinner is at 7:00, and by the time it's over, the ship tends to be at anchor again, so that those passengers who aren't worn out by the day's activities can go into town for a stroll or some nightlife.

The tourism industry worldwide seems to be on a gracious-living kick—for example, piling an ordinary hotel room high with gadgets and toiletries, installing a room divider, and calling the result "your elegantly appointed suite." Exploration Cruise Lines is having none of it. The *Majestic Explorer*'s decorating scheme is middle American. The cabins are simple. The food, too, is middle American, served in a collegiate-style dining hall, which seats all the passengers at once (on up-market cruise ships single-seating dining happens to be a hot new amenity). The food is reminiscent of home cooking. On a given day there might be scrambled eggs and bacon for breakfast, spaghetti with meat sauce for lunch, ice cream with assorted toppings for a mid-afternoon snack, and a choice of marinated flank steak or seafood creole for dinner. Dinner on the final night of the cruise is surf 'n' turf, with champagne. There's no dress code, not even a nudge in the direction of one, except on that final night, when men who have been coming to dinner in shorts and T-shirts all week are somehow inspired to put on long pants and a shirt that buttons.

A person who has never much liked the idea of cruises—say, a person who doesn't happen to have a nice cruise wardrobe and agrees with Thoreau about enterprises that require new clothes—might be grateful to the *Majestic Explorer* for the style as well as the substance of its cruises.

WHEN I FIRST went up on deck to have a look around the *Wind Song*, I exulted to see, reaching high above me, four spotless white masts elaborately fitted out with booms and yards and lines and pulleys. The *Wind Song*, and its two identical-twin sister ships, the *Wind Star* (which cruises the Caribbean) and the *Wind Spirit* (the Riviera and the Caribbean), are, at 440 feet, among the longest sailing vessels ever built. In fact the *Wind Song* is "classified as a sailing vessel with an auxiliary motor," as Captain Jon Bjoerheim explained it. Easterlies prevail in French Polynesia, and it is often necessary to use the electric motor if the ship is to make port on time.

The *Wind Song* is loaded with technological marvels. The bridge, which passengers are invited to visit whenever they wish, is a veritable pinball-and-vid-

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eo-game arcade of brightly colored control screens and navigation aids. Everything from monitoring the temperature in the food-storage rooms to unfurling and positioning the sails and minding the engine is done by computer. A day or two out the chief engineer gives tours of the engine room, and it's spooky: all this clean, complicated machinery is humming away with hardly anyone there to oversee it.

The ship is aesthetically and ergonomically marvelous too. The cabins (which are all, except one extra-large one, substantially the same) are roomy and, at that, brilliantly designed to make the most of the space. They and the public areas are decorated with taste and flair. For example, an original print hung in my cabin; an abstract painting dominated the main lounge. Breakfast and lunch are served in an airy rotunda at the top of the ship. This room and the Restaurant, a wood-paneled dining room that is open only for dinner, accommodate all the passengers in a single seating—or, rather, passengers may come for meals whenever they wish over a period of two hours or so. A specific dress code applies only in the Restaurant: no shorts or T-shirts.

The ship carries two "tender" vessels and four motorized rubber boats, which efficiently bear passengers ashore. (Although the *Wind Song*'s draft is only thirteen and a half feet, this is still too deep to permit the ship to dock at any of the islands except Tahiti and Raiatea.) There's a small pool, and also a "sports platform" at the rear of the ship, which is lowered whenever the *Wind Song* is at anchor in daytime. From here passengers can jump into the ocean for a swim, or go water-skiing, or take out one of the ship's Sunfish or windsurfers.

Day by day I had to think a little harder than I had to aboard the *Majestic Explorer*—go sign up for optional excursions, check the tender schedule, find the social director and quiz her about how to get somewhere on the island of the day, decide whether I'd rather go water-skiing now or continue lying by the pool. The staff was accommodating and personable, and arrangements, once made, went smoothly.

The food on the *Wind Song* was ambitious, with breakfast and lunch buffets supplemented by hot dishes prepared to order, a light tea available in the poolside lounge, and seven-course dinners presenting a choice of five entrees. Passengers' opinions of the caliber of the food differed. The well-traveled wife of an Australian cattle rancher assured me, "The food is every bit as good as it is on Royal Viking"—the cruise line with the world's best culinary reputation. "Maybe there's less variety, but that's the only difference." The well-traveled wife of a Los Angeles business consultant sniffed, "A plate of pastry and finger sandwiches—you call that high tea?" As one whose first visit to Tahiti was made aboard the old Matson Lines' *Mariposa*, where high tea was indeed served—and not just deposited but *served*—daily in the main lounge, I saw her point. Then again, I was so thoroughly bewitched by the *Mariposa*'s rich food that I gained a steady three pounds a week over the course of that six-week cruise. On the *Wind Song* low-calorie foods were plentiful: cold poached salmon, iced essence of fennel and tomatoes, hearts of palm, lobster medallions, fillet of parrot fish, fresh tropical fruit. Somehow I still managed to gain three pounds.

THESE CRUISES ARE expensive, but taking everything into account, the fares are probably no worse than what you'd pay to stay in French Polynesia's notoriously expensive hotels. Staying at hotels, a couple interested in a middling degree of comfort and amenity will spend $350 or more a day just to sleep and eat, plus hundreds or thousands more to get to Tahiti (depending on where they started from), plus hundreds more for inter-island airfare if they want to get around. A couple will typically spend about $500 or $600 a day for one of these cruises. And they will receive from the cruise line a substantial discount on airfare to Tahiti. And they will be borne comfortably, heedlessly, at no extra charge, from one lush, dramatic island to the next.

There's also a do-it-yourself option: chartering a boat and charting your own course around French Polynesia. Since The Moorings, the world's largest yacht-charter company, took over an independent charter company on Raiatea, last year, this option has become easier and cushier. The word is that you are well advised to request one of The Moorings' own boats, as opposed to one remaining from the stock of the erstwhile independent company.

Aboard practically any vessel—assuming cooperative weather—could anyone fail to enjoy a cruise in paradise? *That*, at least, would be original. □

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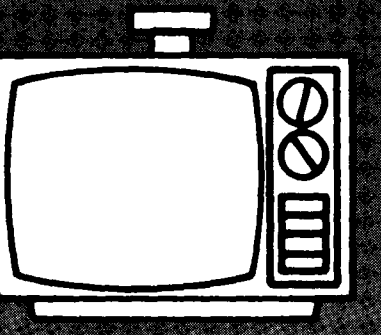

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DANCE

THE RETURN OF THE SHAG

Languid, sensual steps to rhythm and blues are newly popular

BY ROBERT P. CREASE

EACH YEAR DURING the second week after Labor Day thousands of people from all over the Southeast flock to North Myrtle Beach, a town on a stretch of the South Carolina coast called the Grand Strand. The event is a gathering of the Society of Stranders, and its principal function is to celebrate a dance called the shag, a staple of Carolina life. The shag is a slow, easy dance that developed in the late 1940s and early 1950s to early rhythm-and-blues music, but it has endured a lot of changes since then. After a hot summer's day at work, or at the beach, many Carolinians think there is no greater pleasure than grabbing a few beers, heading for a local nightclub, and shagging the evening away. Small wonder that the shag is the state dance of South Carolina, that shag clubs exist in every major city and hundreds of smaller towns in both Carolinas, and that perhaps hundreds of thousands of people do it all over the South.

But few people outside the South have heard of the shag, and even fewer can do it. This may change soon, with the release this month of *Shag*, a film featuring the dance as choreographed by Kenny Ortega, who achieved national recognition as the choreographer of *Dirty Dancing*. Ortega first learned about the shag from some extras who worked on *Dirty Dancing*. "When I finally saw tapes of people shagging, I fell in love with it," Ortega says. "The shag is stylish, it's sexy, and all kinds of people of all ages do it. And what I hope we've captured in this movie is that the shag is a central part of the Carolina life-style."

THAT ESPECIALLY AMERICAN confluence of black music and white kids, usually at hangouts frowned on by adults, gave birth to the shag in the 1940s on the Grand Strand, the fifty-five-mile crescent-shaped beach running north from Georgetown, above Charleston, to the North Carolina border. At that time the Strand was the summer habitat of large numbers of college kids, from all social levels in North and South Carolina, who had become addicted to the free and unruly character of beach life. Away from the supervision of parents or campus authorities, these college kids tended, of course, to act like irresponsible good-for-nothings—beach bums—and were treated as such both by locals and by servicemen on leave from the many military bases in the area.

The college kids learned to make a virtue of necessity by accepting this community rejection and cultivating an aloof, "cool" demeanor. Cool meant, first, a look: for the boys, long, slicked-back, peroxided hair with ducktail, V-necked sweater with no shirt underneath, custom-tailored baggy pants; for the girls, short shorts, cut to reveal a sliver of panty. Cool footgear consisted of simply Weejuns or moccasins; socks were uncool. But cool also meant following a certain routine. Days were spent on the beach. Shortly after dusk the beach bums walked along the boardwalk to the numerous open-air pavilions that were the social centers of all the communities along the Grand Strand. Each had a refreshment stand, an arcade, and, most important, a wooden dance floor with a Wurlitzer jukebox. There the beach bums hung out until somebody came along who could afford to set the machine whirring: a nickel bought one song, a quarter bought five. Until the end of the war white teenagers heard only swing music and danced only the Lindy hop, better known as the jitterbug—a vigorous, jumpy dance that had swept the country in the 1930s. The cooler beach bums preferred hot black bands such as those of Lucky Millinder and Jimmie Lunceford, and the steps they danced to them were smoother and less frantic.

"Nobody started out to invent a new dance," says Billy Jeffers, who first came to the Strand in the late 1930s and stayed through the mid-1940s. "We just didn't think all those jerky jitterbug movements fit in with what life was like at the beach. So we began to dance the way we talked to girls—nice and easy, and real laid back."

An accident of geography changed that slow, cool jitterbug into a distinctive dance all its own. Smack in the middle of the Strand was a single, utterly segregated black community called Atlantic Beach. To this day the beach road makes a detour inland to avoid the town. Atlantic Beach jukeboxes were then stocked with what the trade called "race music"—that is, records made by black musicians and marketed to a black audience. (Only in 1949 did *Billboard* magazine reclassify "race music" on its charts as "rhythm and blues.") Around 1947 Jim Harris, a white man who owned and stocked most of the Strand jukeboxes, including those in Atlantic Beach, began to stick some race-music records, as a curiosity, into some of the Wurlitzers in

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TERRY ALLEN

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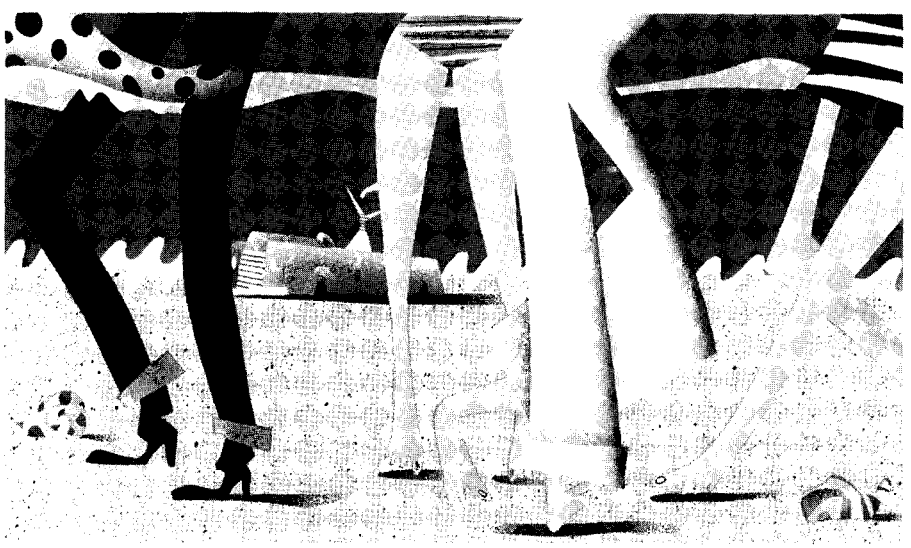
the white pavilions. To his astonishment they were instant hits. Four years before the Cleveland disc jockey Alan Freed inaugurated the great "crossover," by programming black music on white stations, Strand beach bums had already incorporated race music into their lives.

One avid race-music fan was Jo-Jo Putnam, a white South Carolina drummer who first landed on the Strand in 1947, at the age of thirteen. "We *loved* race music, but you couldn't find it on the radio," he says now. "You also couldn't hear it anywhere else: the black groups couldn't play in white clubs and were restricted to what was known as the 'chitlin circuit.' So the only place we white kids heard race music was at the beach."

The dance now called the shag originated when Jo-Jo Putnam's generation met Billy Jeffers's generation—when the slow jitterbug perfected by the latter was adapted to the race music adored by the former. Putnam, for instance, never forgot the moment he first saw Billy Jeffers dancing at Robert's Pavilion, in Ocean Drive Beach (now called North Myrtle Beach). "I couldn't believe my eyes," Putnam told me at a recent Society of Stranders party. "A whole realm of self-expression opened up to me. I thought I'd just been granted the opportunity to participate in a new art form. I almost broke down and wept."



Robert's and the other open-air pavilions with race music on their jukeboxes were the perfect environment for a group of white kids who were cocky and creative enough to invent their own forms of expression and competitive enough to goad one another on. The beach bums would meet nightly to improvise new steps and inspire one another, and to showcase what they did. A new dance had been born. It didn't have a name, and was referred to as "beach dancing," "nigger boogie," "fas' dancing," and "dirty shag," this last after an old Lindy step that vaguely resembled another Carolinian dance, the Charleston. "Shag" eventually stuck.

Some resemblances to the Lindy hop remained. Both are highly improvisational dances, and in both the partners mostly stay at arm's length, rather than clutching each other ballroom-style. In both it's mainly the male who shows off, whereas in ballroom dances his principal function is to show off the woman. But the differences between the Lindy and the shag are fundamental. While Lindy hoppers charge into their steps, shaggers stay aloof and detached. The shag is sexy, but it's not the sweaty sexuality of the Lindy, with its wild animal energy, nor the explicit, aggressive sexuality of the tango, with its pantomimes of hunter and hunted. Instead the shag has a languid sensuality that involves slow, casual thigh and chest contact.

The beach bums put it simply: the shag, done right, is *cool*. Uncool is holding your partner with both hands, ring-around-the-rosy style. Uncool is picking up your feet more than six inches off the ground. Uncool is looking like you know how good you are. Cool is letting your right arm dangle carelessly by your side. Cool is making your feet act as if they are sliding on glass. Cool is looking away from your partner, or facing away from her as if she didn't exist.

In 1951 a black group called the Dominoes released what quickly became the shaggers' anthem of cool—"Sixty Minute Man." The song combines a perfect rhythm-and-blues tempo, an aggressive masculine ethic, and sexual innuendo. It concerns the exploits of a certain Lovin' Dan, who invites women attached to no-good men to drop by his place. Dan tells them what to expect:

> There'll be fifteen minutes of kissin',
> then you'll holler please don't stop.
> There'll be fifteen minutes of teasin',
> fifteen minutes of pleasin',
> and fifteen minutes of blowing my top.
> If your old man ain't treating you right
> Come up and see old Dan.
> I'll rock 'em, roll 'em, all night long
> I'm your sixty minute man.*

In October of 1954 Hurricane Hazel ravaged the Strand from top to bottom, and the Strand beach-bum culture was nearly annihilated. All the boardwalks and pavilions were torn to splinters, along with most of the mom-and-pop cottages that beach bums inhabited during the summer. Few of the pavilions and cottages were rebuilt. Developers bought up beachfront property, and big motels began appearing along the coast. With the cottages gone, the college students stopped coming in the same numbers and stopped learning to shag. The older beach bums moved back inland, to acquire jobs and families.

Here and there small clubs opened up to keep shagging alive. The most notorious of these was The Pad, in Ocean Drive Beach, which opened in 1955, across the street from the remains of Robert's Pavilion. The Pad was in the open carport of a beach house on stilts whose owner had decided to allow dancing and to sell beer. The owner was eventually forced by offended local citizens to build a wall around the dance floor, so that the shag dancing wouldn't corrupt passers-by. At last community pressure prevailed, and in 1967 The Pad went the way of the earlier beach-bum hangouts.

Yet another serious blow to the shag was the sudden stardom, in 1956, of Elvis Presley, followed by Beatlemania. Although nominally inspired by rhythm and blues, Elvis and those who followed sped up the tempo and abandoned the original feeling. The shag had the flexibility to adapt to the considerable variations that rhythm-and-blues music underwent, but the new popular dances,

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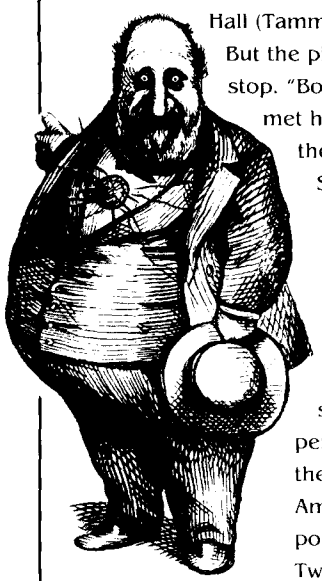

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such as the stroll (1957), the twist (1961), and the shake (1965), were essentially separate steps with no such flexibility. Predictably, these steps enjoyed some popularity for a time and then faded away.

The time between Hurricane Hazel and 1970 is known to local historians as the dark ages of shag. What followed is known, logically enough, as the shag renaissance. In 1970, when disco music was just coming into its own, a former beach bum named Bob Barnhill took over the management of an old bar, called Fat Jack's, in Ocean Drive Beach. Barnhill began with the intention of turning Fat Jack's into a disco. Halfway through the renovations he had a change of heart.

"I told myself I'd give it one more try," Barnhill told me at the Society of Stranders gathering. "Shagging, and the music it was done to, was born here, and I thought it shouldn't die here." He stopped buying mirrors and colored light bulbs, got an old Wurlitzer, and stocked it with rhythm and blues. One of the songs, of course, was "Sixty Minute Man." Barnhill says, "Fat Jack's took off like wildfire. The old beach-bum crowd was ready to return to what they had done as teenagers."

Other former beach bums began converting discos back to shag clubs. Even The Pad reopened. The shag renaissance at the Strand soon spread to Columbia, Charleston, and other places where former beach bums had gone to build careers. Most heartening of all, a few groups of musicians began recording what became known as beach music—not nostalgic rhythm and blues but music with a contemporary feel that was suitable for shagging. Young people began picking up the shag, and it became the dance of choice at college-fraternity beer blasts, proms, reunions, debutante balls, weddings, and all occasions where someone played a beach-music record. In the mid-1970s a North Carolinian from Greensboro named Shad Alberty began actively promoting shag clubs and shag competitions in that state, and in 1978 began offering commercial shag lessons. Shag clubs soon opened in Virginia, Georgia, and Florida, as well.

In the spring of 1980 Gene Laughter, who had been a Strand lifeguard in the early 1950s and is now an advertising executive in Richmond, Virginia, decided to try to stage a reunion of the old beach-bum crowd, sometime the following September for a few days. The idea at first seemed hopeless; there was no way to track down even a handful of the old beach bums, since few of them had ever known one another's last names. The North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce wouldn't help, and local merchants laughed at him, but Laughter decided to go ahead anyway. News spread by word of mouth and with the help of a few obliging local newspapers. About a hundred people were expected. Seven thousand materialized. "You have to realize," Laughter says, "that none of us beach bums made the transition to rock-and-roll. So when the reunion of the group—which we called the Society of Stranders, or SOS—was announced, a whole generation showed up." Delighted by the success, Laughter has organized a similar gathering, open to the public, every year since then.

But even as the SOS gatherings bring together shaggers from all age groups, all classes, and all parts of the South (and some from beyond the South), they also bring to light great differences among shaggers. Old-timers complain that what they see on the dance floor isn't genuine shagging: the shag is an individualized dance, and if you learn it in a school, as most newcomers have, you simply become a clone of the instructor. Newcomers, for their part, tend to view the old-timers as fuddy-duddies and welcome the advent of a certain standardization in the dance, which makes contests possible. All the commotion about authenticity only testifies to how much shaggers care about the dance.

In the middle of a recent SOS gathering I ran across Laughter in a beach-music club just before dawn. I remarked, half jokingly, that since more and more people were doing the shag every year, perhaps the old Grand Strand beach-bum fraternity should turn the situation into money—with books, posters, videos, official contests, T-shirts, trivia games, memberships, and assorted paraphernalia.

The vintage Wurlitzer was pulsing away, and Laughter was sitting on a railing above the dance floor, tapping his Weejuns to an old rhythm-and-blues number about somebody's mean momma. He was wearing cutoffs and his white hair was spilling out from underneath a pith helmet. A paper cup of beer occupied his right hand; he was propped up on the railing with his left.

"Naah," Laughter said. "That wouldn't be cool." □

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FOOD

TOMATO SAUCE

What to do during the annual tomato rush

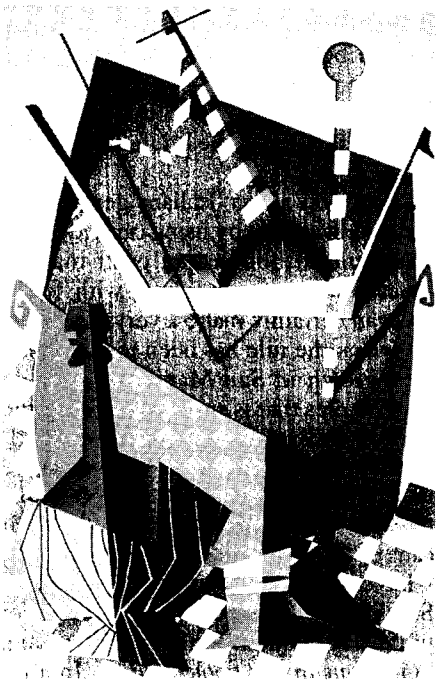
BY CORBY KUMMER

"TOMATO FANCIERS," Miriam Ungerer wrote in her pungent *Country Food*, "begin to get a little hysterical in late summer: they know they will not taste the rich, deep flavor of a real field tomato until next July." The remedy, of course, is to put up tomatoes, so that they will be at hand all through the winter. The Italians, the champion cultivators of the tomato even though they have been at it for only a little more than two hundred years, are tireless in their ways of conserving tomatoes. They home-can them whole, cooked only slightly; they make huge pots of tomato sauce, using very simple recipes that will leave room for later enhancements, and home-can it; and they make tomato paste, a concentrate of cooked-down tomatoes that is both sweet and sharp. The easiest way to take advantage of the crates of ripe tomatoes available now for almost no money is to make sauce that you freeze.

The best sauce, I discovered after a recent bout of sauce-making, is the least cooked. The ample grandmother in television commercials, who wipes her brow with her apron hem after toiling for hours over a big pot of steaming sauce, has worked hard to create something acrid and musty. Her large family should not thank her for it. If you're going to the trouble of using fresh tomatoes—and nothing matches the flavor of fresh, despite the variety and sometimes praiseworthy quality of canned tomatoes—you should preserve their taste, and that means brief cooking.

THE KIND OF tomato to use for sauce is the plum, or pear, tomato, varieties of which include Roma and San Marzano. As delicious as other kinds are, they're built wrong, with too much liquid and too many seeds. By the time they cook down to the right consistency, they have lost their fresh taste. Also, the sweetness of many new kinds of tomatoes, which are often pleasing to eat raw, makes them insipid when cooked. A good sauce needs a balance of sweetness and acidity, and most plum tomatoes offer it, along with a high proportion of flesh and a low one of seeds and liquid. (The acid and sugar dictate the type of pot you choose: not aluminum, since the acid will react with the metal and give an off flavor, and thick-bottomed, so the sugar in a large batch won't scorch easily.)

Plum tomatoes seem to arrive earlier and stay longer in supermarkets, even if they are harder to find ripe. If the ones you buy aren't bright red and don't give at all when pressed, leave them in a paper bag for a few days and they will ripen nicely. Try never to refrigerate tomatoes, unless you are afraid they will rot before you can serve them—their flavor is irreparably diminished. With ripe tomatoes you won't be even tempted to add a pinch of sugar to the sauce, which many books advocate but some cooks shun, as imparting an artificial taste.



The ultimate tomato sauce, annoyingly, requires the most work: peeling and seeding. The resulting tomato flesh takes from four to ten minutes to melt into warm olive oil and cook down into a sauce, which tastes almost like a fruit conserve. It is fresh, bright, and sweet—the essence of tomato and summer. The only better sauce is raw tomato flesh marinated for several hours with oil and herbs, but it won't freeze well. Whole tomatoes can also be cooked quickly and the skins and seeds removed with a food mill (a hand-cranked device that strains food by forcing it against a perforated disc), a process so easy that I recommend it for great quantities. But the taste is inevitably more cooked and acid.

There are two basic Italian tomato sauces. *Salsa di pomodoro* is made from just tomato, onion or garlic, and basil and sometimes other herbs. The version I like uses tomato flesh, but this sauce is more often made with whole tomatoes, and I'll give directions for both. The second is *sugo finto*, which includes the usual aromatic vegetables—carrot, celery, and onion. A *sugo* is usually a meat sauce, and the name *sugo finto* implies that this sauce mimics one (*finto* means "false"); in fact, the taste is richer and deeper than that of plain *salsa di pomodoro*, and more suited to a meat dish like ossobuco or pasta filled with meat than to plain pasta or vegetables. Both sauces are referred to as *marinara*, which means "sailor-style" and is used for any quick tomato sauce. The vegetables in a *sugo finto* give a boost to tomatoes low in flavor or canned tomatoes; the sugar in the onion and carrot balance acid tomatoes, and the celery adds body. But fresh tomatoes at this time of year should make their debut nearly unadorned.

PEELING AND seeding plum tomatoes isn't really hard or even very time-consuming. You can peel ripe tomatoes simply by running the back of a knife against the surface and then taking off the skin; if the tomatoes resist this treatment, immerse them in boiling water for ten to thirty seconds, rinse them so that you can handle them, and take off the skin with your fingers or a paring knife. Cut out the core and halve the tomatoes lengthwise, and squeeze the liquid and seeds into a bowl. The harder you squeeze, the faster the sauce will cook and, if you freeze it, the less watery it will be after defrosting. One advantage to peeling and seeding tomatoes is that it offers the possibility of a chunky sauce, which you can't achieve with a food mill; chop the pieces into half-inch cubes.

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For every three pounds of tomatoes, heat three tablespoons of oil in a pan that is wide, to facilitate evaporation. I find that for this delicate version of *salsa di pomodoro* the best way to add the flavor of garlic or onion is to sauté whole cloves (say, two for every three pounds of tomatoes) or quartered onions (two medium or one large) until lightly browned, add the tomatoes, and remove the garlic or onion after the sauce is cool. If you plan to freeze the sauce for more than three months, add garlic after defrosting—the oils in it can turn bitter in the freezer. I also like to sauté parsley in whole stalks and remove it later; stronger herbs, such as rosemary, sage, and thyme, are also best heated at the start with the onion, but if pureed with the tomatoes, they add unsightly dark-green flecks that will look black after defrosting.

If you have peeled and seeded the tomatoes, cook them at high heat only until they become dense and lose their liquid. This, as I said, is a matter of about four minutes for dead-ripe tomatoes and about eight minutes for harder ones. Take out the onion and herbs, and the sauce is done.

If you can't face peeling and squeezing the case of tomatoes that was such a steal, simply wash them, cut out any rotten parts, and quarter them lengthwise. Stir them over high heat until they turn a deep red and soften enough to pass easily through a food mill—a matter of ten to twelve minutes. Strain them through a food mill, which will remove the skin and seeds. Don't use a blender or a food processor. Either one will simply crush the skins and, worse, the seeds, which will make the sauce bitter. Specialty shops sell Italian tomato-juicers, in which tomatoes are cranked through a hopper and the skins and seeds are removed. Apart from enabling you to pretend that you have clamped the machine to an old card table on an Italian hillside, as cooks all over Italy do in late summer, the only advantage to the machine is that it works faster than many food mills; the texture is identical to that achieved with the finest blade on a food mill.

If the puree seems watery, return it to the heat and reduce it—a wide pan is especially important here, because the less you cook the sauce now, the fresher it will taste when you reheat it. The total cooking time, including the initial ten minutes or so, should not exceed forty minutes. Add a leaf or two of basil for each two cups of sauce (either version) as it cools—this is the best time for basil to impart its perfume, and it is easily removed later—and freeze the sauce in amounts you will need for one meal. The smaller the portions, the better the sauce will taste after you defrost it, because you won't overcook the outer part while waiting for the inner chunk of ice to melt. If the sauce seems flatter than you remember it, add a few drops of lemon juice.

Either version of *salsa di pomodoro* is an ideal base for any other tomato sauce. You can even turn a plain *salsa di pomodoro* into a *sugo finto*, by sautéing onion, carrot, celery, and herbs in oil and adding them to the sauce, and if the sauce was pureed, the vegetables will give it texture. You can heat the sauce in oil in which you have sautéed pieces of hot red pepper. The key to maintaining the taste that distinguishes fresh-tomato sauce from canned-tomato sauce is to cook the other ingredients—roasted and peeled peppers, dried mushrooms, or ground beef or sausage, to name some popular possibilities—completely before heating them with the tomatoes. Stick to the rule of the briefer the better.

THE WAY MOST Italians get through the winter is by using canned tomatoes, and although you can't make a sauce as sweet and rich as with fresh, you can certainly make a very good one. For years the rule has been to buy tomatoes grown in San Marzano, a region near Naples that is supposed to have the soil and climate best suited to full-flavored tomatoes. So powerful is the name, in fact, that many Italian companies put "San Marzano quality" on their cans of tomatoes grown outside the area. I have tried many brands of delicious San Marzano tomatoes, but they are not uniformly good, as Jenifer Harvey Lang points out in her book *Tastings*. In a recent sampling for *Vogue*, Barbara Kafka went so far as to say that all Italian brands of canned tomatoes leave an unpleasant metallic aftertaste.

Both Lang and Kafka favor American tomatoes, an endorsement I am happy to third—although I find the salt levels in most canned American tomatoes, whole or crushed, ruinous. (Tasting canned and bottled tomato sauces is an exercise in sodium and dried-garlic tolerance—more than 600 milligrams of sodium per four-ounce serving is not uncommon, as compared with around thirty-five milligrams in a serving of sauce with no salt added. The best packaged sauce I have tried is an uncooked tomato sauce bottled by Delverde, a pasta manufacturer.) Tomatoes processed for canning supposedly offer the advantage of having been vine-ripened, as opposed to having been picked early to withstand shipping, but many canned tomatoes are pale, acid, and weak in flavor. Among American brands, Redpack has long been a favorite of many cooks, and Hunt's also has its fans. Two companies in northern California, 6 in 1 and 7/11, produce exceptionally meaty and rich crushed tomatoes. Both, unfortunately, use too much salt.

The best tomato product of all is Italian—uncooked puree in aseptic cartons, packaged by Pomi. The puree is sweet and bears no trace of the metal from cans or the acrid taste that even "uncooked" puree has from having been sterilized before being canned. Italians also make the best tomato paste, which should be used very sparingly to beef up weak sauces made with canned tomatoes. The taste is heavy and powerful and not at all the same as that of fresh tomatoes. Paste—including a new sun-dried tomato paste, which can also give dull sauce a jolt—now conveniently comes in tubes.

The best way to use canned tomatoes is in a *sugo finto*. It is usually pointless as well as wasteful to try to mimic a fresh sauce by draining whole canned tomatoes and then squeezing out the juice and seeds before cooking them. The flavor of the tomatoes is almost always imbalanced—too dull or too sour—and not meant to be spotlighted. Draining tomatoes is necessary, though, for tomatoes packed in juice, which will taste overcooked by the time the juice boils down to the right thickness. Many whole and crushed tomatoes are packed in puree, which will work well for a quick sauce but not for a long-cooked sauce, because the saltiness of most purees will be so intensified by reduction.

Canned tomatoes are also suited to the deeper-flavored sauces found in the south of Italy, which often include combinations of diced prosciutto, tomato paste, plenty of garlic, and even beef broth and wine. Carlo Middione's excellent *Food of Southern Italy* offers such sauces, and also a "traditional tomato sauce" that is cooked for three hours. The sauce will bring a shock of recognition to anyone who was introduced to Italian food in a restaurant with Chianti-bottle candlesticks. It will put you in mind of grandmothers in aprons. □

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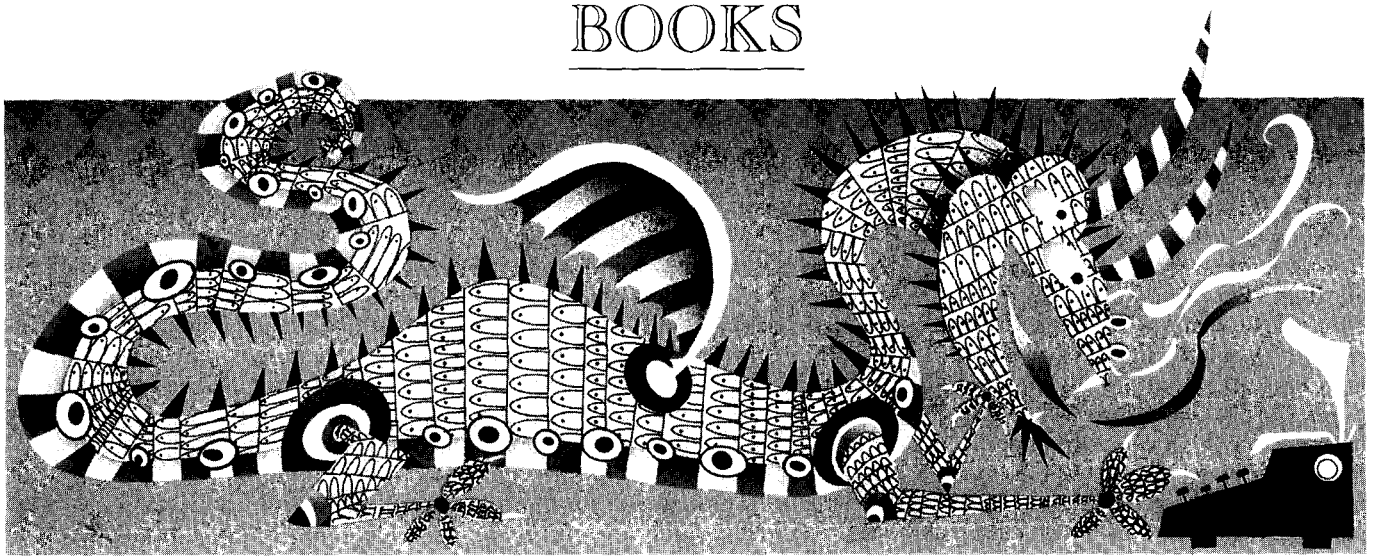
BOOKS



WHEN EAST MET WEST

BY JAMES FALLOWS

OXFORD IN ASIA PAPERBACKS
Oxford University Press.

THE SECRET REASON to travel is to have a chance to read. In normal life it's embarrassing to sit in an office all afternoon just reading a book, even assuming that your job allows you to. But when you're on a plane or a train or in a hotel, this is a perfectly respectable way to pass the time. Overseas travel offers the greatest opportunities for reading—the journeys are longer, there are fewer distractions like TV—and also the strongest incentives. So many new and puzzling things are going on all around you. By reading other people's accounts and observations, you can get your bearings much more quickly than you ever could on your own.

In a really foreign culture, reading in your comfortable home language can be essential for mental stability. For one thirty-hour period last year I was trapped by bad weather inside a small hotel in rural Korea. My belongings were trapped somewhere else. Every bit of printed matter in that hotel, from the toilet-paper wrapper to the bedside Bible, was printed in Hangul, the Korean script. Except for the letters *OB* on a beer can (the name of Korea's most popular beer), I could not find a single thing written in any language I could understand. During those hours I learned how to write *Bible* and *Kodak Color Film* in Korean, but I also learned that my capacity for self-amusement is limited. Since then I've tried not even to leave my house without books stuck in my pockets.

Much of the time, the books have been from the Oxford in Asia Paperbacks series. This collection of about eighty volumes, published over the past half a dozen years by the Oxford University Press, is one of the brilliant coups of modern publishing. It is not yet well known in the United States, but it should be. (Only five of the titles mentioned here have been published by the American division of Oxford University Press; other titles are to come.)

The idea behind the series was to exploit one of the happier effects of European colonialism: that so many English, American, and European writers toured the Orient in the colonial age. A few of their stories and travelogues have remained in print on their own—the works of big-time writers such as George Orwell, Joseph Conrad, even Lafcadio Hearn. But scores of others have been ignored and would have turned up only in library stacks or used-book stores until Oxford in Asia. At some point, presumably, Oxford will hit the bottom of the barrel and find only books that deserve to be ignored, but it hasn't come close to that point yet. I've read about forty of the books, and have read with admiration for both the authors who wrote them and the editors who decided to give them new life.

THERE IS A geographic skew to the series, within its overall Asian emphasis. Most of the writers are British, and so the greatest number of books are about places where Britons have been able to operate freely. More than a dozen books are set in old Malaya or Borneo, and nearly as many in Singapore and Hong Kong.

There are almost twenty books about Indonesia—by English and American writers who traveled there, and by Dutch writers whose works were translated into English when they first came out—but few about French Indonesia and none about Japan or its former colonies, Korea and Taiwan. This omission does not leave any serious gap in our understanding of Japan, since so many other books on the subject are constantly being published. It does, however, illustrate a trivial-sounding yet important problem in Korea's relations with the rest of the world. Because Korea was both populated and colonized by people who don't speak a European language and was largely closed to Western travelers until forty years ago, there's surprisingly little literature about it in English, French, or German. No popular novels like *Shōgun* or *Spring Moon*, no colonial-era fiction like that by Maugham or Malraux, no translated classics like those by José Rizal, of the Philippines, or Mochtar Lubis, of Indonesia—practically nothing except *M*A*S*H* and modern studies of the Korean car business. One Western ambassador in Seoul told me not long ago that this was a potentially large difficulty in Korea's dealings with the West: English-language readers have some mental picture of what life is like in Tokyo or Manila, but it is very hard for them to imagine Seoul or Pusan.

The Oxford outlook is skewed in another way. Since most of the books are by non-Asians, they are, by definition,

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outsiders' accounts. Sometimes the writers use Asia largely as a backdrop for studying the nuances of transplanted European society. This bias is not such a bad thing. Precisely because they're outsiders, the writers keep returning to the theme that remains engrossing today: how Eastern and Western cultures differ and interact. (Even for other Asians, cultural comparisons seem irresistible. Two hundred years before Marco Polo went to China, a Chinese emissary named Chou Ta-Kuan visited the Cambodian court at Angkor. His report, *The Customs of Cambodia*—published not by Oxford but by The Siam Society, in Bangkok—is full of remarks like this: "In fertilizing the fields and growing vegetables, no use is made of human dung, which they look on as an impure practice. Chinese who travel to this country never mention the use of dung in China, for fear of arousing Cambodian scorn.")

The cover artwork for *Ah King and Other Stories*, by Somerset Maugham, sums up the East-meets-West spirit of the series as a whole. It's an old hand-colored tintype photo, probably taken at a hill station in Malaya. In the foreground is a manicured English-style lawn, complete with park bench. In the middle distance the lawn runs into and disappears beneath encroaching branches of the dense, disorderly, vaguely menacing tropical jungle. At the edge of the lawn a slight young man in a topee and a white drill suit stares apprehensively into the jungle, rising slightly on his toes. His hands are held behind him with palms facing back, like the hands of a child tantalized by what he sees but afraid to step too close. Here is the white man in the East.

MAUGHAM IS THE one truly famous writer represented in the series, with two volumes of short stories and a travel book about China. Modern readers may not pay attention to Maugham anymore—I had never read his stories before I came to Asia and found a regional-research reason to do so. The stories in these collections show why he was celebrated; they are marvels of pure, clear expression and rich character observation.

A step or two down the scale of prominence is the locally renowned *Twilight in Djakarta*, by Mochtar Lubis. This is a deft polemical novel set in the late 1950s, Sukarno's zenith in Indonesia. It shows how the ostentatious "nationalism" and "non-alignment" of the era ripened into the all-encompassing corruption that still affects Indonesia; the mood is a spookier, angrier version of that evoked by *The Year of Living Dangerously*. Sukarno got the point: Lubis was imprisoned several times after the book came out. The other somewhat well-known book in the series is *Shanghai '37*, by the Viennese writer Vicky Baum, which was an attempt to duplicate the success of Baum's earlier smash hit, *Grand Hotel*. The book takes the same approach as *Ship of Fools* and *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*: it follows a group of characters from wildly different backgrounds toward their shared doom, in Shanghai. Baum is not as polished a writer as Maugham, but the book is vivid and forceful as historical documentary, showing the utter decadence of China just before it fell to the Japanese. (This may sound improbable, but a great companion document about the mood of pre-war Shanghai, as I discovered while reading to my children, is *The Blue Lotus*, from the Tintin series of cartoon books by Hergé.)

The other books in the series include straight travelogues (for instance, *Temples and Elephants: Travels in Siam in 1881–1882*, by Carl Bock, and *Unbeaten Tracks in the Islands of the Far East*, by Anna Forbes); memoirs (*A House in Bali*, by Colin McPhee); novels (*The Soul of Malaya*, by Henri Fauconnier); and assorted histories, biographies, and guidebooks. The novels and memoirs usually make for the most satisfying reading. Three in particular left me wondering, Why isn't this book more famous?

One of these is *Teak-Wallah*, by Reginald Campbell (*wallah* means, roughly, "guy" or "man"). Campbell was a jaunty young Scotsman who went to Siam to manage a teak plantation when he was mustered out of the Royal Navy at the end of the First World War. He spent four years in the forests and wrote his memoirs a dozen years later. The tone of his book is entirely winning. Campbell had what is objectively a terrible time in Siam—continually being thrown off his recalcitrant horses; coping with cobras and leeches, man-eating tigers, ordinarily loyal elephants that would go into musth (a kind of periodic madness); and finally getting so weak from chronic tropical illness that he was sent home. Yet his spirits never sagged, and his prose never loses its sparkle and good humor. This is a marvelous book, which should be better known than George Orwell's *Burmese Days*.

A second surprising find is *Tropic Fever*, by Ladislao Székely. Székely was from a genteel Hungarian family that lost its fortune when he was a child. At the turn of the century he went to Sumatra, then part of the Dutch East Indies (and now part of Indonesia), to make his fortune as a rubber planter. He stayed there through 1918, during precisely the years of the great despoliation of Sumatra. The rain forests were clear-cut and replanted in rubber; Chinese were hauled in by the thousands and set to work as coolies; Javanese peasants simply wilted and died when put to forced labor, like the Indians of the Americas under the Spanish. Székely depicts the whole macabre scene in a perfectly controlled deadpan style, often with a note of black comedy. There is a fascinating twist to this book, because of two others included in the series, *Rubber* and *Coolie*, both by Madelon Lulofs. Lulofs had been raised in the Indies in a prominent Dutch family. She married a respectable planter—and then ran off with Székely, in 1930. One year later she published *Rubber*, which scandalized Dutch readers with its portrayal of what colonial life was really like. The planters in her book rose before dawn, browbeat coolies all day, and drank themselves silly each night. The wives despaired as they grew older each day in the jungle, with no one to see them but the servants, and turned to adultery or even suicide. A year after *Rubber*, Lulofs turned out *Coolie*, a preposterous but entertaining attempt to present the Sumatran scene from the point of view of a Javanese coolie. Székely's book came out later, and was never as famous as his wife's were, but

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it now seems more accomplished as literature and more powerful as social commentary.

A third memorable, and very ominous, book is *The Flying Fox*, a novel by Mary McMinnies. It is set in Malaya at the very end of the British era—in the late 1950s, when the Communist guerrillas had just been contained and the Britons had nominally handed control over to the Malayans but had stayed on as advisers and experts. This book concentrates on what is a background theme in most other colonial novels: alcohol. Its central figure, Milton Hall, ruins his life in England through drink, gets a lucky new start in the East, and inevitably ruins several more lives there. To me, this book was fully as unsettling and impressive as Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano*.

I could go on with two dozen more titles. *Six Years in the Malay Jungle*, by Carveth Wells, is a more excited, tall-tales version of *Teak-Wallah*. *The Soul of Malaya*, by Henri Fauconnier, is a French counterpart of *Tropic Fever*. Peter Quennell's *Superficial Journey Through Tokyo and Peking*, from the 1930s, is the best sort of English literary travel writing. *The Field Book of a Jungle-Wallah*, by Charles Hose, is a delightful account of the natural history of Borneo. And so on. The only book I'd recommend avoiding is *Snake Wine*, by Patrick Anderson (a British Canadian, not the American writer of the same name), a self-important account of two years spent teaching in Singapore in the 1950s.

Apart from the inspired selections, the series is beautifully produced. The editions sold in Asia are high-quality paperbacks—heavy paper, sturdy bindings, wide margins, and the stately-looking and easy-to-read big type of the colonial age. (Many books appear to have been reprinted from the original plates.) The cover artwork is consistently striking and appropriate. Whoever is responsible for Oxford in Asia can be proud.

These books are meant to be more than mere entertainment, of course. They have something to say about Asia. Now and then when reading about nineteenth-century planters or travelers, I have been struck by things that have changed. From what I can tell, alcohol is nowhere near as important to Westerners in Asia as the books say it used to be. Nor are the Dutch as important to anyone in Asia; while they held Indonesia, they were a major force in the region, but now they are not. Margaret Brooke, the Rahnee of Sarawak, begins her memoirs with these magisterial words: "Every one has heard of Rajah Brooke." When she wrote, before the First World War, that was true—the Brookes were the legendary "white Rajahs of Sarawak," the English family that had made itself the hereditary rulers of northern Borneo. No Westerner in Asia since MacArthur or Mountbatten could be the subject of such a claim.

More often, however, I have been struck by seeing how much is the same. Nineteenth-century travelers in Thailand remarked on the country's serenity and seeming good cheer; it is the same today. Planters in Malaya and Sumatra talked about the seething tension between Chinese and Malays; now that Malaysia and Indonesia are independent countries, their politics revolve around the same ethnic friction. A colonial wife in *The Flying Fox* despairs before the predictability of the tropical day.

> It never occurred to Rose to wonder whether or not it would be a fine day. It would be a day like any other, which is to say that in the space of twelve hours the Malayan skies would run through their entire repertoire of sun, calm, gale, electric storm, rain, and then sun again. . . . let's have no sweet reason, no milk-and-watery English sun, no meek skies nor spring showers . . . extremes . . . extremes.

I know that sense of being defeated by the sun and the rain. Peter Quennell described the enormous sense of freedom he felt when, in the late 1930s, he escaped from claustrophobic, conformist Japan to big, disorderly China. Fifty years later I felt exactly that emotion. "Under the even flow of Japanese life one reaches down to a fundamental lack of sympathy," Quennell wrote, "and in China, for all its desolation, are still traces of a world one can comprehend." Any Westerner who has been in the two countries knows what he meant.

Through all these books, even in the rantings of the most pompous planter, runs a sense of awe about what the West has gotten itself into in Asia. Some cultures may still be materially poor; they may look up to the West in certain ways. But they have been here so long, their people are so numerous, they are so difficult to understand and yet so compelling: this part of the old attitude remains truest of all. □

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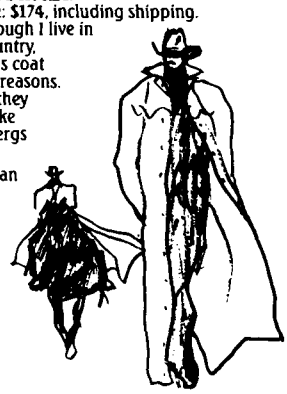

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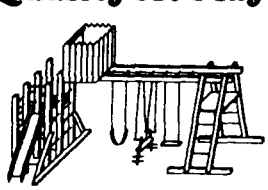

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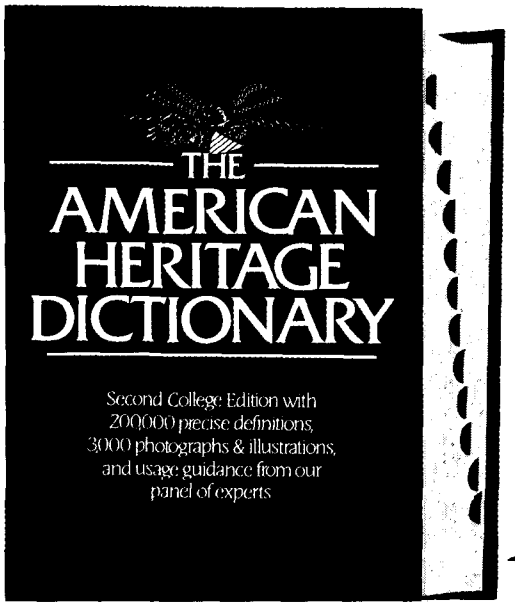

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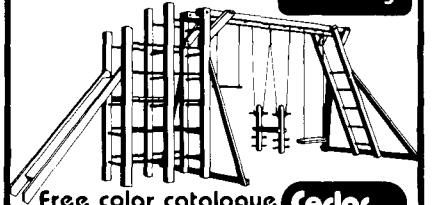

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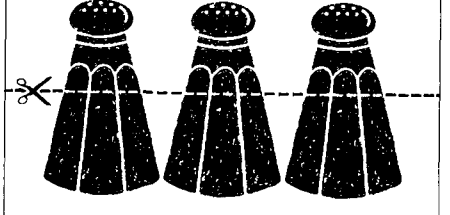

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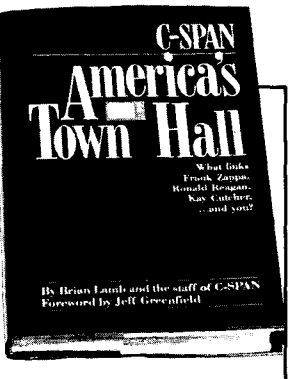

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THE HIPNESS UNTO DEATH

BY SVEN BIRKERTS

BOXED IN: The Culture of TV
by Mark Crispin Miller.
Northwestern University Press,
$39.95 and $14.95.

AT SOME POINT IN the 1950s television ceased to be just an odd-looking gizmo—a radio running a picture track—and entered the bloodstream of our culture. The culture must have been ready, for as soon as it lodged, the medium flourished as few things beneficent ever do: growing, improving, widening its empery until now, only a few decades later, it is one—very likely the *only*—thing we all have in common. Daily and nightly we gather in front of the glass, arrested by the forms our collective dreaming takes.

The statistics are boggling. Average daily watching time is routinely placed between four and six hours per person. *Per person!* That means, of course, that there have to be millions and millions of people who do nothing but watch. Which in turn means . . . Well, it may mean any number of different things. To the stolid non-alarmists it means little—they call it a harmless pleasure and point back to the mass spectatorship at gladiator fights. Educators, however, make a connection to falling SAT scores and burgeoning illiteracy. A few worried souls go still further. They see in our prostration before the electronic altar the direst of portents: that the race has given up on ideals of individual attainment and is slipping backward into an oceanic state of mass passivity.

Mark Crispin Miller, an essayist and television critic, takes up his post somewhere near the latter end of the spectrum. While those at the opposite end might brand him a TV "crank," the tag hardly sticks to a thinker as lucid and witty as Miller. Indeed, these virtues will make *Boxed In: The Culture of TV* a threat to all shrugging equanimity. Miller's essays are the most provocative writing on the subject since Marshall McLuhan first made it a subject.

Miller's subtitle is an elegant contrivance, oxymoronic in playing off "culture" and "TV," and suggestive in its activation of a secondary meaning—a culture as a bacterial growth that can be

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studied. But where the scientist makes use of slides and high-powered microscopes, Miller relies on more speculative equipment. Essentially, he applies the close-reading skills he learned in academia (he now professes film criticism in the Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University) to the sprawling but finally closed (hence "boxed in") system of the media. And though he might cringe at any close association with the chic discipline of deconstruction—his prose, happily, is jargon-free—his procedure does involve a kindred disinterring of paradoxes and concealed contradictions. Miller's aim is to expose the mendaciousness behind the blithe façade, the skull beneath the skin.

TELEVISION, AS MILLER asserts in "The Hipness Unto Death," his sharply argued introduction, has finally swamped us. By the late 1970s almost all protest and outcry had died out. "Here was the completion of an enormous transformation," he writes, "all the more striking for the fact that no one was struck by it." And this saturation, which Miller sees as an implicit vanquishing of dissent, was precisely what our advertising conglomerates had been striving to achieve. For they had long since grasped that the medium was the ultimate selling machine. Not just because images and product pitches could be directed at a passive watcher but—even more insidious—because exposure to a seamless, hypnotic, self-referential world wore away at all scruples and inhibitions. It turned everyone, however briefly, into the child at the toy-store window.

Programming *programs*—the principle is that simple. And programming in America, Miller insists, serves the imperatives of capital at every turn. "Advertising executives," another television critic has said, "like to say that television shows are the meat in a commercial sandwich." Sadly, these bosses further dictate that the meat will be nothing but baloney and more baloney. They have seen to it that network programming has steadily purged itself of everything that might remind the viewer that there is still a world outside TV: they would create "a site secured against all threatening juxtaposition." Miller refuses the traditional perspective—that network television is simply giving the public what it wants. His overriding vision requires that he argue the reverse, even if it leads him to an occasional improbable hypothesis. Miller writes, for instance,

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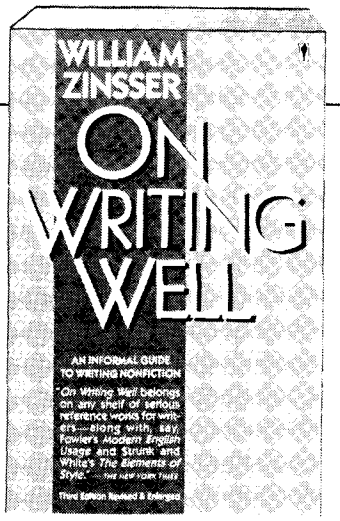

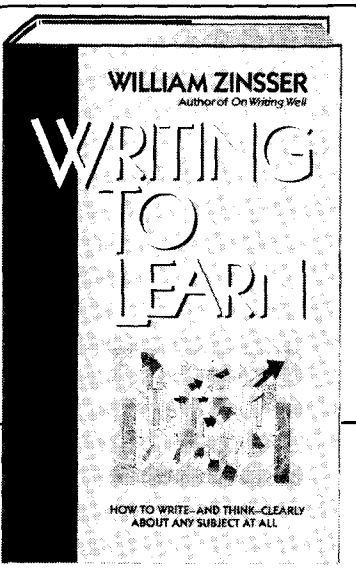

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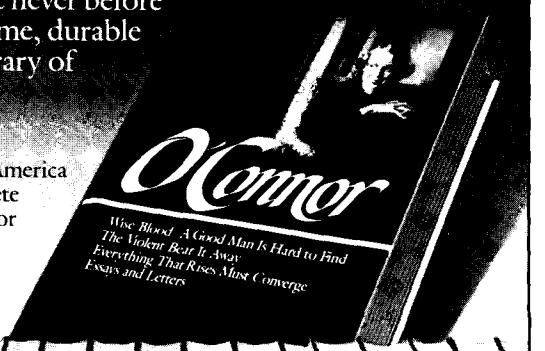

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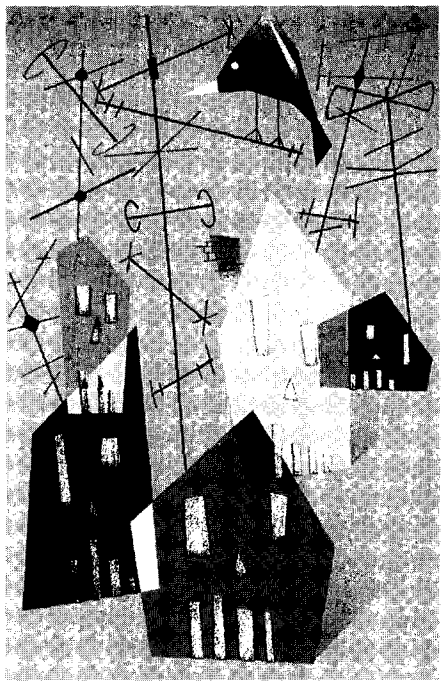
that those old prime-time stand-bys, the westerns, were phased out because the independent ethos of the solitary frontiersman was just too much at odds with the kind of herd docility that advertising would foster. The point makes sense logically. But Miller underestimates the degree to which content depends upon context. If these brokers can get the Beatles' "Revolution" to sell running shoes, then they can surely co-opt the iconic lone cowpoke on his horse. It could just be that natural selection—that is, the shifting of viewer tastes—finished off the western.

In Miller's scheme the greatest potential threat to TV's sly blandishments is the unassimilated watcher—the detached mocker who might spot the subtle coercion of the sales pitch, and balk. But here, as elsewhere, the medium is ahead of its audience.

Most ads and shows have incorporated, in defense, a "hip," winking attitude. "TV preempts derision," Miller writes, "by itself evincing endless irony. . . . TV protects its ads from mockery by doing all the mocking, thereby posing as an ally to the incredulous spectator."

Miller's analysis, be assured, is not a conspiracy theory. He fingers no Madison Avenue cabals or boardroom villains. Those days are gone. What Miller suggests is that the fundamentally commercial nature of TV works to make it a self-regulating system. That is, the ultimate logic of consumer advertising would have all watchers be led to think in the same ways, and thus want the same things. Members of the media workforce don't need orders from above any longer. They know what makes ratings and they push their pitches accordingly. "More disquieting even than the old nightmare of conspiracy," the author says, "is the likelihood that no conspiracy is needed." He reverts to this idea in a more sustained way at the end of the book.

The first dozen essays, composing a section titled "What's on TV," are model subversions. Miller, like Roland Barthes before him, proves that popular culture yields wonders when subjected to academic modes of scrutiny. In each instance he isolates a particular TV narrative—thereby breaking the contextual spell—and then reads its images to uncover the underlying structure. Since everything on TV is calculated to sway and *sell*, results are guaranteed—there are always subliminal messages. Drawing from a wide sample—he looks at ads, game shows, documentaries, newscasting, and prime-time offerings—Miller ends up making a comprehensive inquiry into what might be called the televisual psyche. If it's true that we become what we behold, then we are in serious trouble.



In "Massa, Come Home," for instance, Miller unpacks the well-known "Come to Jamaica" commercial until the play of its master-slave archetypes is fully visible. Dismantling the ad frame by frame, he shows how the carefully juxtaposed images both cancel all fears about violent or uppity natives—fears prompted by reports of real unrest—and affirm the place of those same natives as cheerful domestics.

> The opening shot presents an image of impending violence converted into recreation. A group of blacks, wearing helmets, waving sticks, gallop on horseback toward the camera. One of them pulls ahead of the others, swinging his instrument down like a sabre, and strikes—a polo ball. It is an archetypal vision of imminent destruction (there are, in fact, four horsemen here), but the martial implication is simultaneously denied, as if to say, "You expect to be killed by our natives? Sit back and relax! This is only an athletic display!"

By the time he's finished, Miller has exposed the covert racism in every last image. The lulling, enticing narrative will never seem anything but pernicious now.

Miller's other analyses are no less eye-opening. "Getting Dirty," his reading of a deodorant-soap ad, wittily discovers a subtext of slippery sexual innuendoes, all orchestrated along "pseudofeminist" lines to flatter the female consumer with references to her sexual and—implicitly—financial power. "Virtù, Inc." examines the carefully projected images of the Reagan presidency. Miller finds that they neatly reflect the tenets enumerated by Machiavelli in *The Prince*, only modernized for a media age. Reagan, who is for Miller "an anthology of the worst of popular culture, edited for television," has parlayed gestures and postures into the enormous power of mandate.

But even the President is subject to the media, "which sets him up and breaks him down according to its own implicit schedule—he thrives only as a novelty, then turns at once into a joke or a nostalgia item." Miller's essay "A Viewer's Campaign Diary, 1984" goes behind the scenes to show just how this kind of setting up and breaking down actually happens.

MILLER'S MODE OF close reading gets us in behind the programming façade, convincing us, finally, that every instant, every televised image, is the function of a baser calculation. But while this approach effectively strips the content, it gives no purchase on the form—the technology—itself. The kinds of questions that Marshall McLuhan raised back in the sixties are still with us. The steady interaction of viewer psyche and medium has to result in profound reorganizations within that psyche. What about induced passivity, shortened attention spans, and impaired reality-testing? "What's on TV" tells part of the story, but "What's TV?" would tell another part.

Miller might, for example, usefully glance at the impact that the medium has had in an avowedly non-capitalistic country like the Soviet Union. Image production there is nowhere near our standard of sophistication, nor is it subject to the same *sell* imperatives, but the bottom-line effect on viewers is not so different. As Ellen Mickiewicz reports in her study *Split Signals: Television and Politics in the Soviet Union* (Oxford University Press, 1988),

> The television viewer is very much the consumer. . . no longer the *Homo faber* that Marx envisioned. . . . The "new Soviet man" is now in the arm-

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chair in front of the television set, and so is the rest of the family.

Advertising may well be bending us to its will, but it can do so because of the form, the very *structure*, of the medium.

After two short sections that detour into other realms of popular culture—rock-and-roll and cinema—Miller returns to his central subject. Only now he is gazing from a higher and more frightening altitude. "Big Brother Is You, Watching," an essay written to mark the arrival of the Orwell year, brings news every bit as chilling as what we find in *1984*.

Miller begins by establishing a strong connection between Orwell's vision of Oceana and the radical critique of the Enlightenment carried out by Max Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno. For those two thinkers, the Enlightenment ideal was responsible for the crisis of modernity. Its ultimate program, as they wrote in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, was "the disenchantment of the world; the dissolution of myths and the substitution of knowledge for fancy." But what began as the desire for the rational mastery of nature led, in Pandora's-box fashion, to the mass extermination of human beings and the atomic bomb. Once unleashed, the impulse to control and dominate could not be contained.

Orwell's Oceana is, for Miller, the apotheosis of these deeper tendencies of the Enlightenment. Rational understanding has become the tool of authority. In Oceana, he writes, "the Party sees through anyone who would see through the Party, because the Party has seen through itself already. . . ." Its impulse is to totality, and to the erasing of all individual subjectivity in the interests of absolute control. One of its most powerful devices, and defenses, is the promulgation of "relentless irony."

Now comes the leap. Television, Miller insists, makes use of the same strategy for the same end: to flatten all resistance, to enlist all would-be opponents, to achieve total domination through identification. Because the medium is deeply iconoclastic—capable of seeing through all behaviors and reducing all differences—it ceaselessly cuts away at independent subjectivity. The viewer is finally brought to inhabit a condition of "hip inertia."

Once again, Miller is not blaming the machinations of media elites. This silent transformation is coming about through the logic at the very heart of consumer

Answers to the August Puzzles

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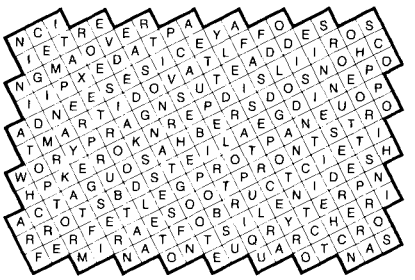

Clues. 1. ENI(G)MATIC (*g* + anag.) 2. OVERT-AXED 3. AD(V)ERTISE (anag. + *v*) 4. CAP-TI-(VAT)E 5. L(AF)AYETTE 6. DA-FFO-DILS (*slid* + *off* rev.) 7. IR(ON)S-IDES 8. HOROSCOPE (anag.) 9. IMP-ENDING 10. EX(P)ERT-IS-E 11. DI(A)G-NOSE'S 12. SUPERNOVA (anag.) 13. DIS(RE)PUTE 14. D(ISL)ODGES 15. INNU-(END)OS (*unions* anag.) 16. OPPOR-TUNE (*pop or* anag.) 17. MAN-DA(TO-R)Y 18. P(OR-T)RAYER 19. KANGAROOS (anag. minus *h*) 20. H(I-BERN)ATE 21. LI-BERATOR (*Roberta* anag.) 22. PAT-R(ON)AGE 23. TENANCIES (anag.) 24. TEE (SH-I)RTS (rev.) 25. P(ATCHW)ORK (*watch* anag.) 26. GRUBS-TAKE 27. DOUB(T)-LE-SS 28. GO-OSESTEP (*poetess* anag.) 29. T(URBOPR)OP (*or burp* anag.) 30. COR-PU-LENT (*up* + *roc* rev.) 31. IN(T[h]E-R)DICT 32. PRERINSED (anag.) 33. RE(FRA)CTOR 34. FI(REST-O)RM 35. A-L(TERN)ATE 36. FO(OTNOT)ES (*Tonto* rev.) 37. SO-BRIQUET 38. R(ELI)QUARY (*quarry* anag.) 39. CR(OTCHET)Y (*the cot* anag.) 40. RAN-CH-EROS

ACROSTIC NO. 37

"[Victorian] suction devices [were] powered by various types of bellows. . . . The most bizarre vacuum cleaner consisted of two bellows which the hapless maid was to wear as shoes, and which caused the nozzle to suck air as she walked around the room."

—Witold Rybczynski, *Home*

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advertising, which is the logic at the heart of capitalism. The viewer will in time become kin to Orwell's Winston Smith: "In too many ways, the ex-hero of this brilliant, dismal book anticipates those TV viewers who are incapable of reading it: 'In these days he could never fix his mind on any one subject for more than a few moments at a time.' " Miller adds, "At this moment, Winston Smith is, for the first time in his life, not under surveillance." Simply, when enough of the subliminal structure has been internalized, no control from without is needed: "As you watch, there is no Big Brother out there watching you—not because there isn't a Big Brother, but because Big Brother is you, watching." If you can get to the end of this essay, this book, without feeling a chill, you may be beyond reclamation.

Though he is often incisively humorous, Miller is ultimately pessimistic in his vision. The reader looks for signs of hope, for averting turns that might still be made; none are given. Maybe the one bright spot is the example of Miller himself. After all, here is a man who has put in countless hours before the set but remains brilliantly sane. He is himself an advertisement for critical consciousness in the face of all-but-irresistible seduction—an Odysseus smart enough to tie himself to the mast. His *Boxed In* is the kind of criticism we will need in ever-greater supply, lest we drown in the effluence of popular "culture." □

BRIEF REVIEWS

I, Eve *by Edward Le Comte. Atheneum, $14.95.* Eve, engaged in covering the late Adam with river mud (Cain has not got around to inventing the shovel), recalls her life with that exasperating, unfaithful, inconsiderate, arrogant spouse, who was always claiming advice from God but was no help at all with the children. Aside from her entertaining ability to quote from texts composed thousands of years in the future, Eve sounds like a suburban matron who has had her consciousness raised. This is undoubtedly precisely the effect that Mr. Le Comte intended to produce, and it is tartly amusing although hardly likely to encourage dedicated feminists. Men, it seems, never were much good.

Jean Stafford: A Biography *by David Roberts. Little, Brown, $24.95.* After impressive early success as a fiction writer, Stafford ceased creative work and settled into what was, by comparison, hack journalism and into eventual status as East Hampton's distinguished local curmudgeon. The specific elements in this decline include resentment of all her relatives except her brother (who was safely dead and unable to give offense), two misguided marriages, persistent heavy drinking, and a succession of accidents and ailments that would be unbelievable if they were not entrenched in medical records. Stafford's miseries, however painful to her, provide her biographer with consistently surprising, even gaudy material and grab the reader's attention with the what-next clutch of a soap opera. Mr. Roberts has made admirable use of research and quotation to bring his subject to life as a brilliant woman whom one would just as soon not have for a next-door neighbor.

Northern Light *by Kirk Varnedoe. Yale University Press, $50.00.* At a casual glance much Scandinavian painting of the late nineteenth century looks like an offshoot of French Impressionism, but Mr. Varnedoe believes that the motives underlying it—nationalism and anti-industrialization, among others—were peculiarly and independently Scandinavian. He argues his case well, and the fine color plates in this lavishly produced book support it. The northerners may have studied in the south—usually did—but they used their skill on their home ground for their own purposes, and those purposes can be seen in their work.

Wheat That Springeth Green *by J. F. Powers. Knopf, $18.95.* Mr. Powers follows Father Joe Hackett from idealistic youth to complacent middle age to a small, not unsuccessful rebellion. The episodes that make up the tale are mostly minor matters, for the activities of a well-behaved Catholic priest in a well-behaved suburban parish do not run to melodrama, but these events are held together by the basic theme of money. How the church gets money, how that money is spent, and how much of a pastor's time and effort should be devoted to finance are the questions underlying this elegantly written, ruefully humorous novel.

Musui's Story *by Katsu Kokichi, translated by Teruko Craig. University of Arizona Press, $19.95.* Katsu Kokichi was born in 1802 and died in 1850 after a thoroughly disorderly life. He must have been the despair of his correct samurai family and was indeed on one occasion threatened with confinement to a cage in the garden. As an autobiographer, however, he is rewarding company. His memoirs, ostensibly written as an awful warning to his children, are the work of an unrepentant scalawag, public nuisance, and energetic unemployable. The Tokugawa shogunate (1600–1868), by imposing peace and order, had converted samurai from soldiers to bureaucrats, leaving unscholarly types like Katsu with nothing official to do. What he found to do provides a lively revelation of the world of brawls, gangsterism, and petty swindling behind the formal façade of nineteenth-century Japanese society. Ms. Craig's introduction and notes are excellent, as are the maps and illustrations supporting the text.

The Village of Waiting *by George Packer. Vintage/Random House, $7.95.* As a Peace Corps volunteer in the early 1980s Mr. Packer was shipped to Togo, given a crash course in one of several local languages, and sent to teach English in the village of Lavié. *Lavié* means "wait a while," and waiting, in Mr. Packer's opinion, is what all of Togo is doing—waiting for development, social freedom, and prosperity, which, in a country divided by different languages, haunted by old tribal suspicions and hostilities, and encumbered by authoritarian habits instilled by former colonial proprietors, are not likely to arrive. The author's account of his experiences in Africa is partly a frank, subjective description of the loneliness, bewilderment, and occasional panic that beset him in his isolated post, and partly a sympathetic and respectful study of the Togolese whom he came to know. His report is informative but not optimistic.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

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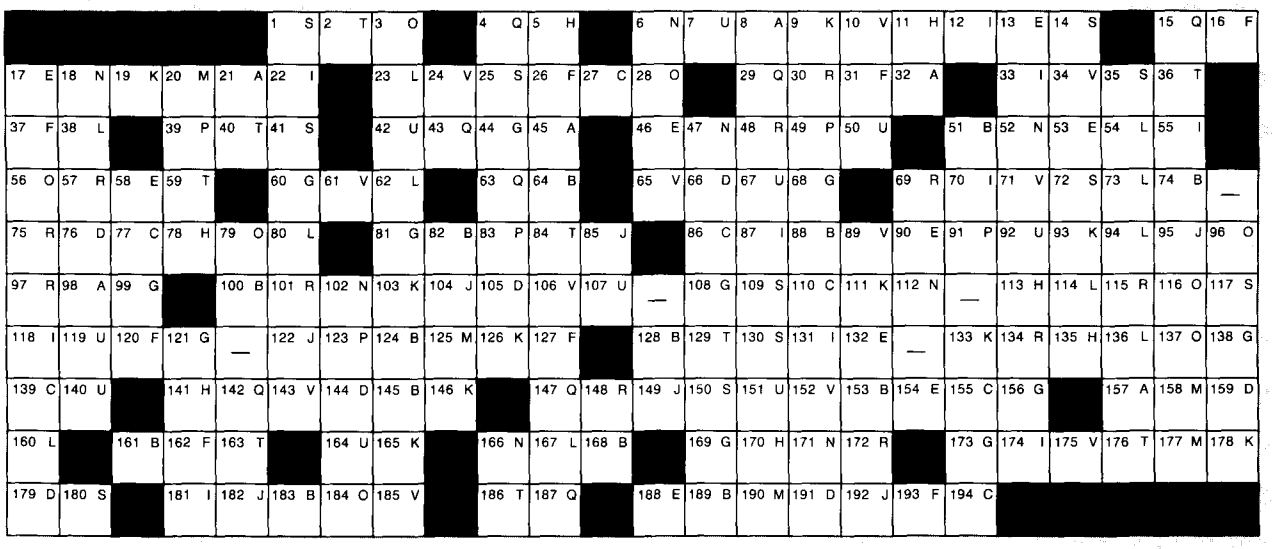
ACROSTIC NO. 38

BY DOROTHY OSBORNE

The letters of clue answers, when put in the appropriately numbered squares, will spell out a quotation. The first letters of clue answers spell the author and source of the quotation.



The solution to Acrostic No. 37 appears on page 97.

A. Nymph changed into a laurel tree — 45 21 157 8 32 98

B. Political newsletter begun in 1953 (4 wds.) — 82 124 100 153 161 189 88 64 128 / 168 183 51 145 74

C. Attack with harsh words (2 wds.) — 27 77 139 194 86 155 110

D. Maker of violins or guitars — 191 179 144 66 105 159 76

E. Instrument superseded by the sextant — 58 13 17 132 154 90 46 53 188

F. Wielder of influence over Czar Nicholas II's court — 31 16 193 26 120 127 37 162

G. Wildlife refuge in Virginia (2 wds.) — 99 138 156 81 108 121 68 60 44 / 169 173

H. Unfair criticism (2 wds.) — 141 5 78 113 135 170 11

I. Porter number from *Can-Can* (3 wds.) — 12 22 174 87 131 181 55 70 118 33

J. Monarch butterfly's mimic — 104 192 95 122 149 182 85

K. Summertime pick-me-up (2 wds.) — 103 133 9 93 126 19 178 165 146 111

L. Emotional frenzy, as for something unattainable — 38 80 160 73 167 136 54 114 23 / 94 62

M. Author of many books on bridge — 190 158 177 125 20

N. Common *fonda* order — 47 52 102 112 18 166 6 171

O. Jewish skullcap — 3 96 137 184 116 79 56 28

P. Opera by Gounod — 123 91 49 83 39

Q. *Apollo 12*'s Lunar Excursion Module — 142 187 29 15 43 147 63 4

R. "Plug-in drug" abuser (2 wds.) — 75 48 30 69 57 97 134 101 115 / 172 148

S. Lack of coordination; klutziness (3 wds.) — 130 1 25 180 72 35 150 109 41 / 14 117

T. With U., Best Picture of 1967 (6 wds.) — 186 59 84 40 176 2 163 129 36

U. See T. — 164 119 7 140 151 92 67 107 42 50

V. School with campuses in Chicago and Evanston — 152 34 10 65 61 175 71 185 143 / 24 89 106

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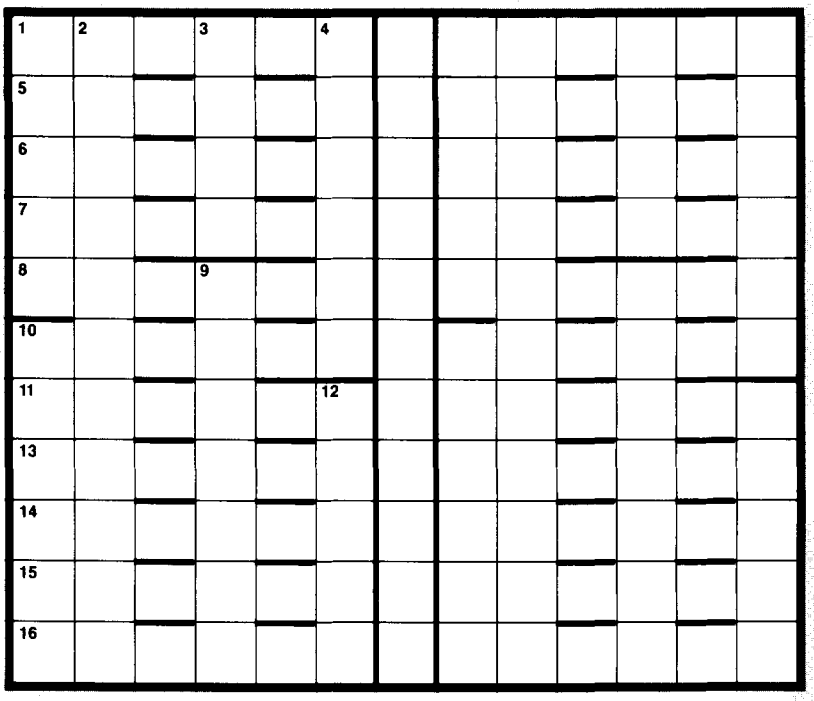
THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

LEFT, RIGHT, & CENTER

Words are clued in pairs, with one word in each pair belonging in the left side of the diagram and the other in the equivalent place on the right. Either word may be clued first. Each Across pair comprises a 6-letter word and a 7-letter word. The 7-letter word, too long for its diagram row, will extend its first or last letter into the central column. In the finished diagram, the 11 letters in the center will spell out a phrase appropriate to their location. Answers include five proper words; two answers (clued at 11 Across and 14 Across) are not in *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary.*

The answers to last month's Puzzler appear on page 97.



ACROSS

1. "Left, Right, & Center" can make you go real crazy about isolated spot in puzzle
5. Cracking clue in central parts without help requires college degree for sea dweller
6. Diggers in the earth, getting cross with harrow, put down seed pod randomly
7. Before catching plane from Russia (one leaving the country), I touch down again someplace in Europe
8. Good grade in test of a group singer in a star cast
10. "Worthless pair of presents," growls Southern liberal, called back
11. Almost crippled after sack uproar, Swaggart moved out west with motley crews
13. Deviant that maintains struggle against government's extreme viewpoint in dispute
14. Being difficult, Uncle Philip left wild viper to Turner
15. Track racer has a grating round in schedule I first set apart
16. Stripper, frontally nude, sinuously moved feather and wiggled cane in rite

DOWN

1. Slow profit is about right—under one grand on Iowa city's entertainment (5,5)
2. Our newspaper endlessly distorted nuke horror, with atomic device almost landing on one country (11,11)
3. A woman's name associated with novels and a man's name associated with Eskimo legends (4,4)
4. Play diamond in 500 rummy—I led hearts after club comes in (6,6)
9. Painting of royal couple aboard boat tossing in gale, crowned by bishop from Ghent (7,7)
10. Not very smart of us to be playing G sharp when transposing charts (6,6)
12. I, famous Rebel, fight insatiable desire in green grass (5,5)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 8 Arlington Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

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WORD WATCH

BY ANNE H. SOUKHANOV

Here are a few of the words being tracked by the editors of The American Heritage Dictionary, *published by Houghton Mifflin. A new word that exhibits sustained use may eventually make its way into the dictionary. The information below represents the first stage of research, not the final product.*

liger *noun*, an interspecies hybrid cat, with light ocher stripes and, in the male, a mane, produced by crossing a male lion with a female tiger: "[The] two young *ligers*, which are already larger than their lion father, may become the largest living members of the cat family" (Springfield, Mass., *Morning Union*).

BACKGROUND: Here is an example of word formation imitating life: in addition to the blend *liger*, there is *tiglon* or *tigon*, denoting a cross between a male tiger and a female lion. Backcrossing a *liger* with a tiger yields a *tili*. This sort of genetic manipulation of the big cats has occurred chiefly in circuses, according to Ulysses S. Seal, a scientist at the University of Minnesota. For example, in an extensive breeding program Josip Marcan, an animal handler with the Clyde Beatty–Cole Brothers Circus, has produced a male *liger* weighing 900 pounds and a litter of *tilis*. It was Marcan who first named his "completely new species" the *liger*. He and other circus breeders have managed to overcome the natural antipathy between lions and tigers by raising them together from birth, thereby facilitating the breeding process later on and avoiding the use of artificial insemination. Zoo professionals, whose traditional responsibility has been to protect and preserve self-sustaining breeding populations of pure, often endangered species, generally object to genetic manipulation of the cat family. David Anderson, the curator of the Audubon Zoo, in New Orleans, says that breeders are treating the cats "like orchids" in a "totally irresponsible" effort to make money. He characterizes *ligers*, *tiglons*, and *tilis* as "junk animals." And Seal notes that these breeding experiments "reflect our age-old penchant for the freak, the sideshow, the deviant." But economic considerations could prompt a change in attitude among zoo officials about designer cats, according to Oliver Ryder, of the San Diego Zoo. " 'Many zoos, in order to function, are going to have to have something to do with attendance. . . . The common area of ground with the circus is showing something that is unusual' " (United Press International).

informate *verb*, to extract useful information from the successful performance of tasks. Used of information technology: "[Information technology] *informates* as well as automates. It 'textualizes' the production process" (*The New York Times*).

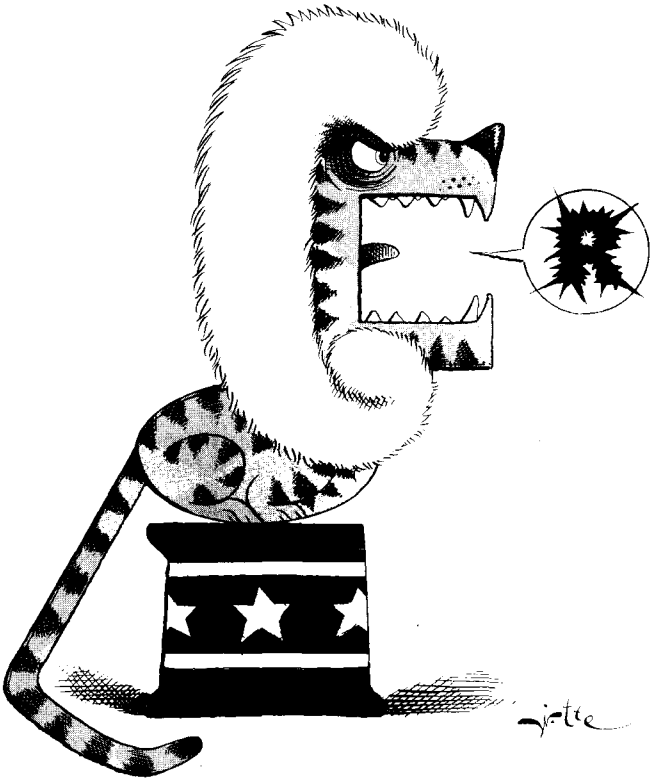
BACKGROUND: *Informate*, pronounced with primary stress on the first syllable, is, like *automate*, a back-formation. Coined roughly thirty years after the appearance of *automate*, *informate* is the creation of Shoshona Zuboff, a specialist in social psychology and the history of work. According to *The New York Times*, Zuboff coined the word "for what she finds to be the most far-reaching use of the new technologies: a process of continual learning that companies use to improve products or services and to enhance their production, distribution or marketing. . . . *Informating*—the smartest way to computerize a workplace—collects data about those tasks to find greater efficiency." Although *informate* may jar the sensibilities of linguistic purists, it was formed in exactly the same manner as *donate*, a fixture in English since 1785.

New York barricade *noun*, a two-by-four nailed across the door of a crack house to prevent entry by clients or by law-enforcement officers: "They were faced with raiding a barricaded apartment like the one . . . where [he] was shot as he took a sledgehammer to the door. The two troopers . . . learned through surveillance that the drug dealers had *New York barricades* . . . and sold drugs through a door slot" (*Boston Globe*).

BACKGROUND: State names have long been used in combination with other nouns to yield compounds, especially in the fields of zoology and botany: *Virginia creeper*, *Oregon jay*, *Florida wax scale*, and *Alabama terrapin* are a handful of thousands of examples. City names have also been so used in various fields: *Chicago style* (a method of butchering animals), *Denver sandwich* (a western sandwich), and *Philadelphia lawyer* (an exceptionally shrewd attorney) readily come to mind. *New York barricade*, which at first glance might suggest traffic control, detours, or meter maids, in the manner of *Jersey barrier* and *Denver boot*, falls instead into the lexicon of the drug culture, which also makes prolific use of such "geonouns": *California cornflakes* (cocaine), *Texas tea* (marijuana), and the jocular *Manhattan white*, also called *New York City silver* and *subway silver* (an imaginary, highly potent albino marijuana that grows from seeds flushed into the New York sewer system).

swim spa *noun*, a usually prefabricated fiber-glass pool measuring about eight by 14 feet, having an adjustable current that allows the user to exercise by swimming in place, eliminating the need for a larger pool: "Not every backyard has room for a 70-foot lap pool. Those who are short on space but long on energy might consider *swim spas*" (*Boston* magazine).

BACKGROUND: According to the March, 1988, issue of *Boston* magazine, *swim spas* "have been trickling into New England for the last three to four years." Costing about $15,000, this type of pool has a hydrotherapy spa at one end and the swimming area at the other, with the artificial current powered by a built-in jet.



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